



Conservation, restoration and research of historic buildings and artefacts

**Analysis of historic decorative schemes
“Thornbank”, Falcon Cliff Terrace, Douglas, Isle of Man
Designed by MacKay Hugh Baillie Scott (1897)**

Manx National Heritage

Author: Paul Croft (Conservator & Research Fellow)

February 2016

School of History and Heritage
College of Arts
University of Lincoln
Brayford Pool
Lincoln
LN6 7TS

Phone: 01522 83 5051/5055
Email: info@lincolnconservation.co.uk
Web: www.lincolnconservation.co.uk
Twitter: @LinConservation



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

1.0: Introduction

‘Thornbank’ is an end terrace property situated on Falcon Cliff Terrace in Douglas, Isle of Man. The house was constructed in 1897 to a design by the celebrated Arts & Crafts Architect, MacKay Hugh Baillie Scott.

Fig.1: Thornbank, Falcon Cliff Terrace



Lincoln Conservation were commissioned by Manx National Heritage to investigate the decorative history of the house since construction, with particular emphasis on the earliest decorative scheme extant soon after construction in 1897. Further to this, a number of key paint samples were removed from all areas of the house (covering all three floors) and a limited amount uncovering work undertaken to reveal any evidence on site of specialised decorative finishes (e.g. stencilling) and provide an accurate record to scale allowing for their reinstatement at a later date if required.

All paint samples were mounted in cross section in polyester resin and polished back to reveal the stratigraphy of paint layers applied over time. All were examined under a high powered Leica binocular microscope using both simulated daylight and ultra-violet. Daylight illumination provides an indication of colour and highlights dirt layers between paint schemes (assisting the definition of primers and top coats). Ultra-violet illumination defines the type of paint used (lead or zinc oil paints, modern alkyd paints, distempers and varnish layers). This provisional report provides annotated images of some of these key samples and should be read with the earliest layers at the base of the image with subsequent paint layers stacked above, as they would have been applied in real time.

The word “scheme” is used to define each application and includes both primers and top coats as appropriate.

This report provides an indication of all the decorative schemes applied with the narrative focussing solely on the original decorative appearance of the house.

2.0: The exterior

Fig.2: Photomicrograph, sample 12.84 window joinery (X100)

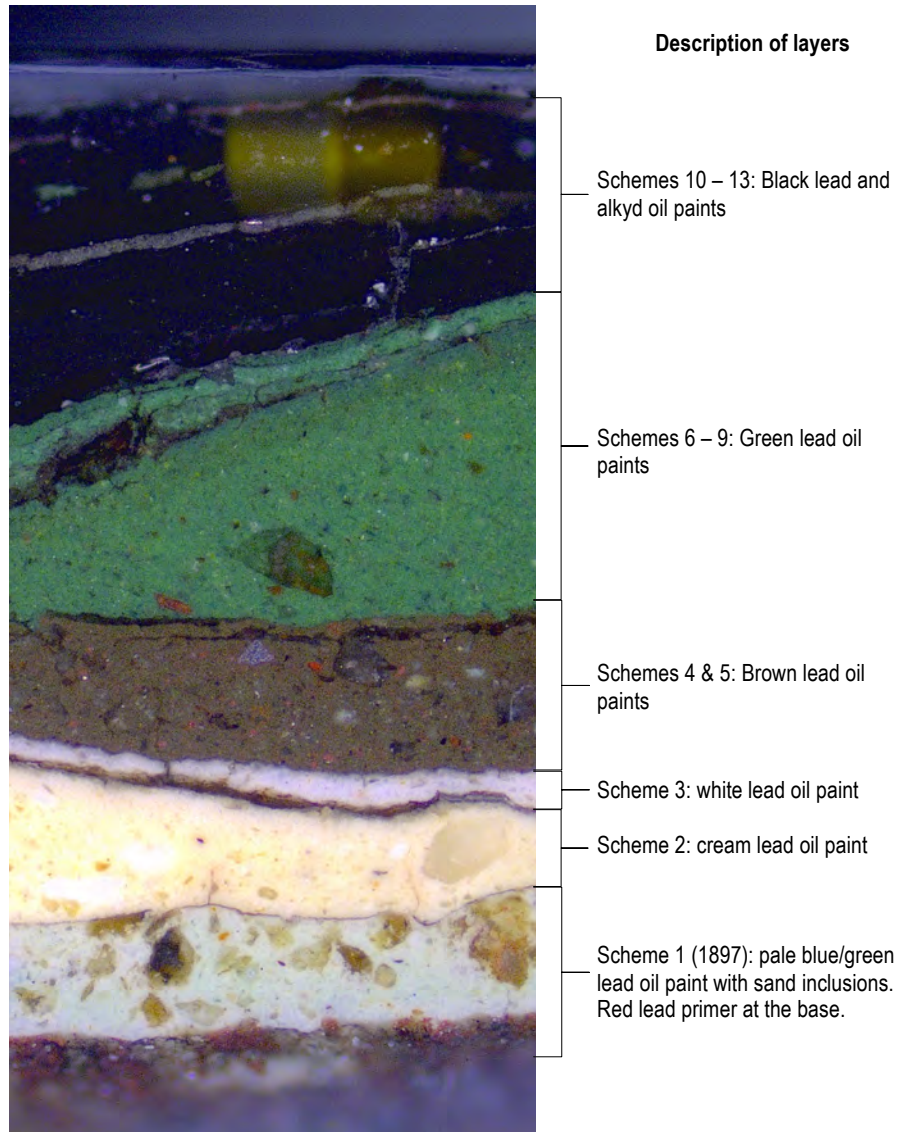
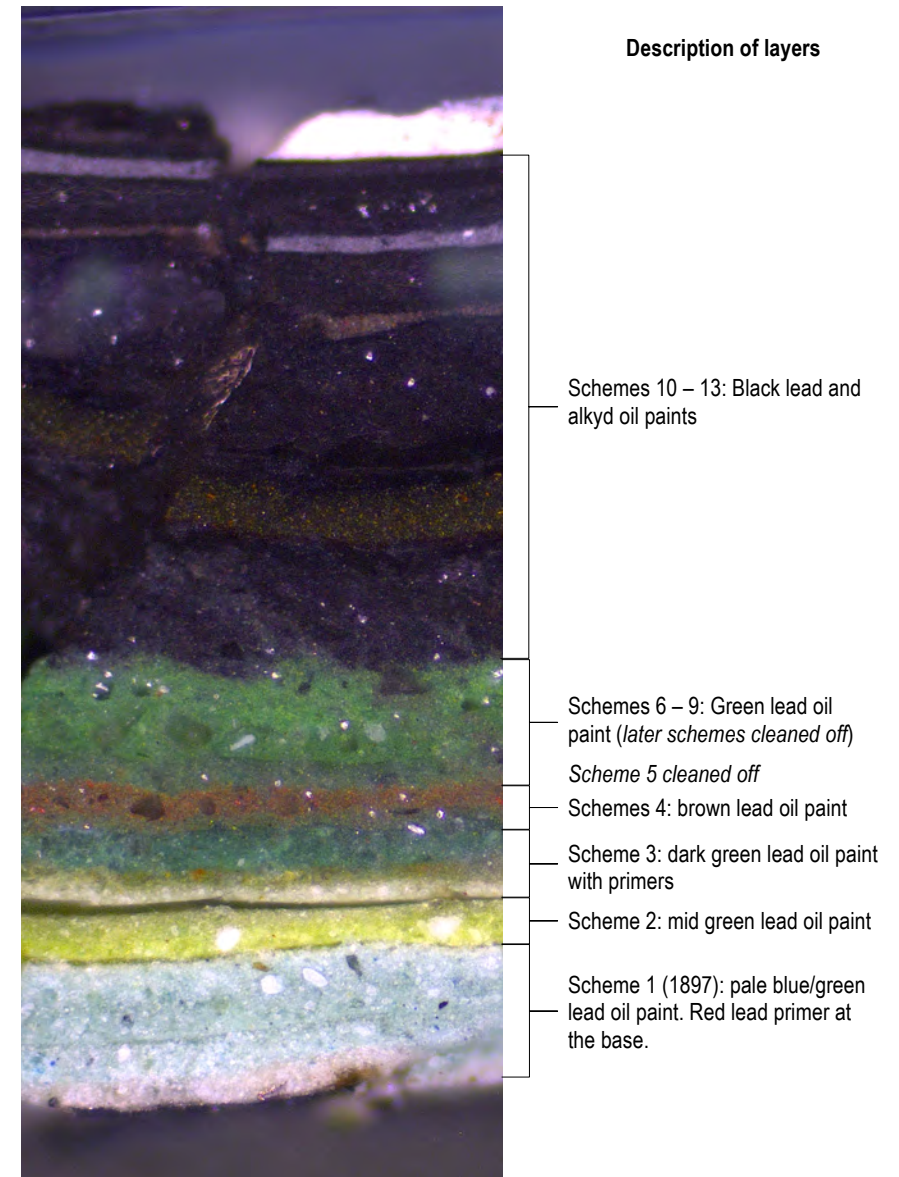


Fig.3: Photomicrograph, sample 13.86 Front Door (hinge) X200



The front door and windows are currently painted black and in most areas much of the earlier paint schemes have been lost where surfaces have been rubbed down in preparation for the application of new paint.

However, one small concealed area in the corner of the Lobby window, directly adjacent to the front door has retained a full chronology of the decorative schemes applied.

In addition, the timber front door (which appears to be original) has been largely stripped in the past with evidence of only the current black paint scheme with associated primer. There is a heavy build up of paint on the door hinge that has escaped this rigorous cleaning and again retains a full paint history.

Please refer to figs. 2 & 3.

At scheme 1 (1897) both the windows and front door were primed with red lead and painted in pale blue/green oil paint. The paint applied to the windows has fine sand incorporated into the paint itself which would have resulted in a faintly rough finish and may have been done in sympathy with the rough cast render applied to the external walls.

This is a significant discovery and an important feature of the original decorative appearance of the building. Similar sanded paint finishes have been detected by Lincoln Conservation on another Arts & Crafts building (although slightly later – dating to 1912) at St. Peter’s Street, Derby, designed by the architect Alfred Nelson Bromley.

The first repaint (at scheme 2) saw the introduction of a green and cream theme (typical of the Edwardian period), with the windows in cream and the door green. This was followed at scheme 3 (1920’s/30’s) with white applied to the windows and the door in dark green. Subsequent repaints of the external joinery were applied uniformly, initially in brown (schemes 4 & 5) and later dark green (schemes 6 – 9). Traces of the

dark green paint are still visible in some areas, notably on the cement pointing beneath the Lobby window and on the concrete steps outside the rear of the property.

An examination of the roughcast render itself revealed only the currently extant modern white alkyd paint and the render itself appears to be a later application. The new render appears to have been applied uniformly to all areas excluding an area behind the rainwater downpipe on the right of the building. It appears this was not removed when the building was re-rendered and there are traces of an earlier colour beneath the current white, in a cream or stone coloured oil paint.

This report will focus primarily of the earliest decorative scheme and provide an insight into the appearance and significance of this important Arts & Crafts period interior.

3.0: The interior

3.1: Entrance vestibule and Cloak Room

Immediately behind the front door is a small entrance vestibule with a quarry tiled floor and cloak room off to the side. This area is currently uniformly painted white. No samples were removed from the wood panelling in this area to avoid damaging the surface, but a small area of white paint was cleaned off to reveal the original surface beneath - in a dark oak varnish. The remaining joinery in this area (entrance door & frame, windows, cloak room door and stair side) was also originally varnished dark oak (see fig.4)

Fig.4: Photomicrograph, Sample 2.9 cloak room window (representative of all remaining joinery in this area)

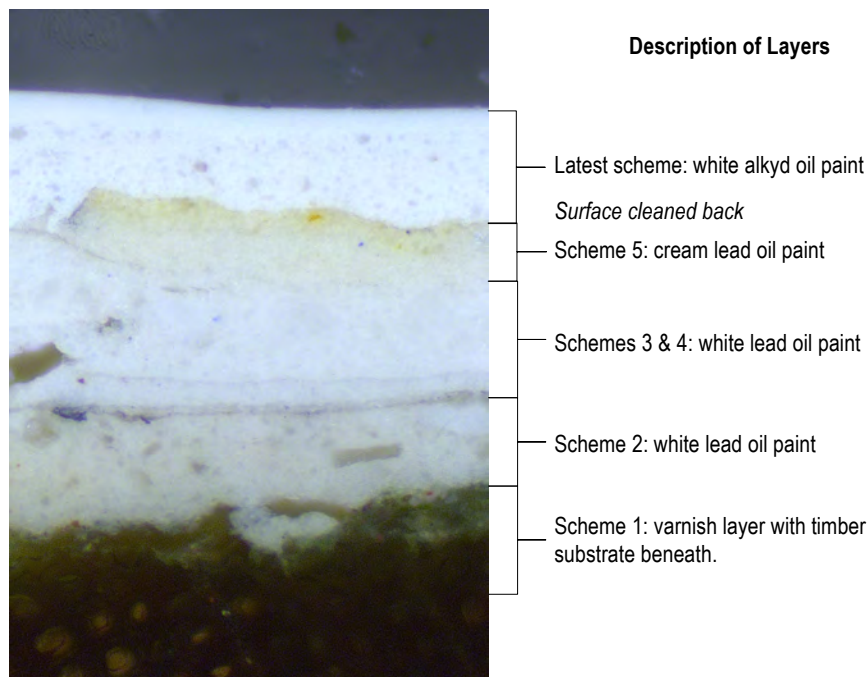
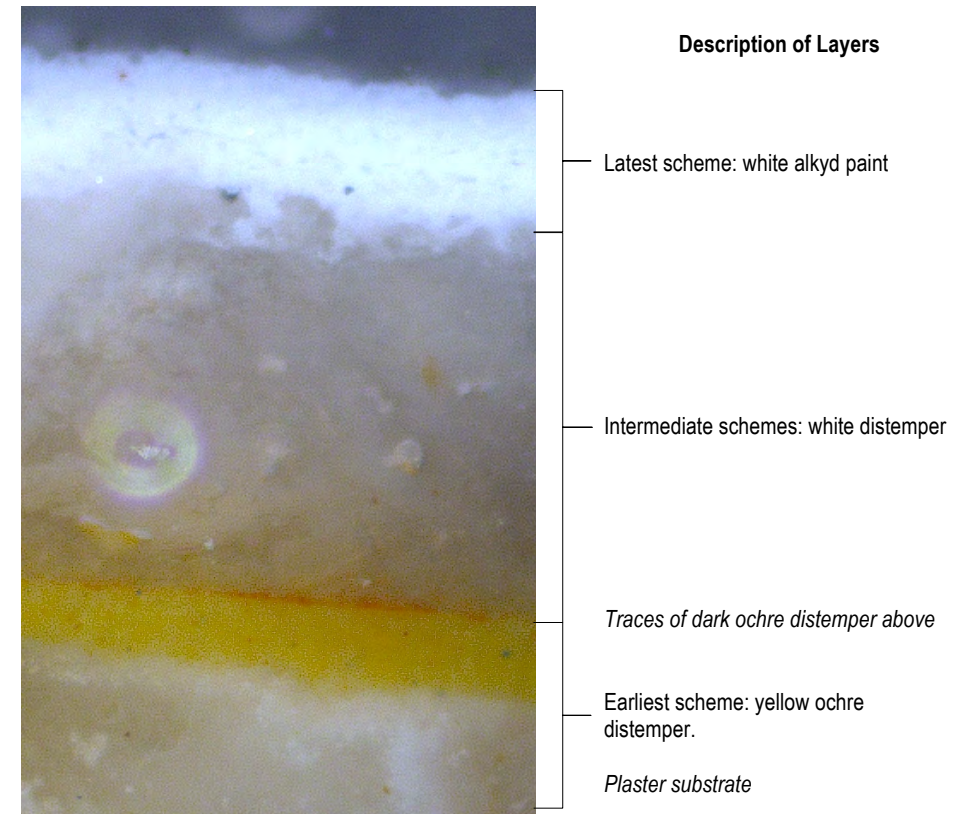


Fig.5: Cloak Room walls



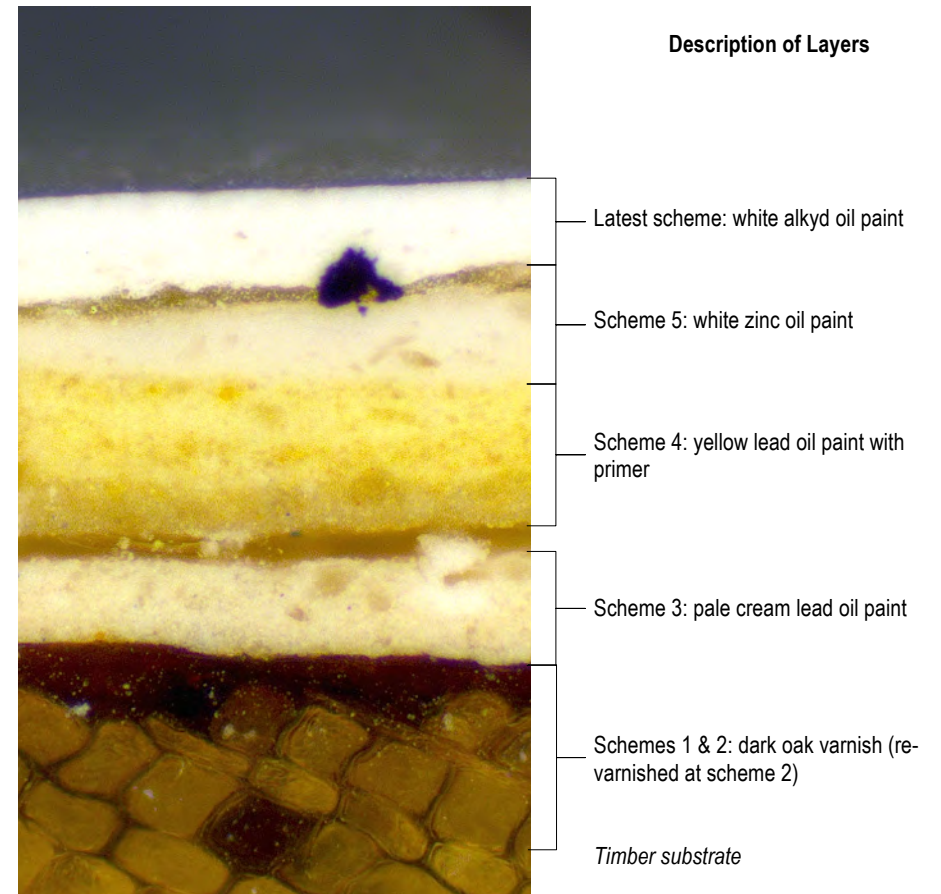
The cloak room walls were originally painted in a yellow ochre coloured, water based distemper, with trace evidence for a further application in dark ochre above and several later schemes in white distemper. The current scheme was applied in a white alkyd oil paint.

3.2: (Fig.5) The Entrance Hall



All the joinery in this area is currently varnished dark oak, which reflects its original appearance. The timber coving running around the perimeter of the ceiling is currently painted white, but this too was originally varnished dark oak (see fig.6).

Fig.6: Photomicrograph sample 1.2, Coving



The walls

The walls in the Entrance Hall are currently covered in lining paper and painted white. There is a frieze running around this area at high level between the picture rail and ceiling coving, clearly visible behind an area of paper that has been removed depicting a repeating pattern of a ship in sail.

This design was painted in soft, water-based distempers on a distemper background and is very fragile. This original decorative scheme was eventually papered over and painted white, obscuring the design and preserving it behind the paper. The application of a water based wall paper paste directly onto the surface reactivated the glue binder in the distemper resulting in the loss of some of the ochre pigments when the paper was removed, leaving behind faint traces of the outline of the original design.

Two images of the frieze are included in figs 9 & 10, the first displaying the design as it was revealed and the second a reconstruction on a pale ochre background with the stencil picked out in dark ochre.

The remaining wall faces in the Entrance hall were originally ochre distempered in the same background colour as the upper wall face frieze (see fig.8), with this colour extending into the upper wall face of the stair well (above dado level only).

Fig.8: Photomicrograph, sample 1.5 Entrance Hall walls (below frieze)

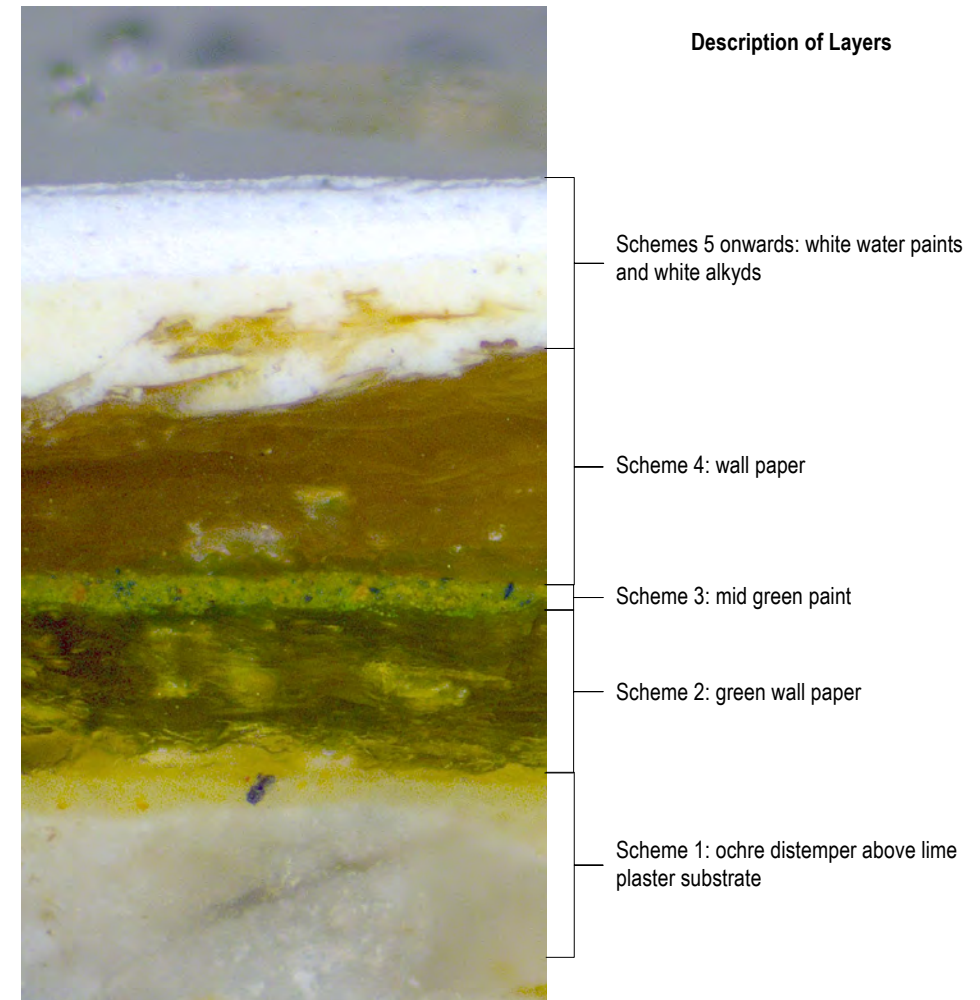


Fig.9: Entrance Hall frieze (as revealed and prior to reconstruction)



Fig.10: Entrance Hall frieze (reconstructed)



It was common practice to distemper freshly lime-plastered walls and this was considered as part of the plasterer’s art, rather than applied by a decorator¹. Lime plaster takes a considerable amount of time to cure (up to one year) and soft distempers are vapour permeable allowing the lime to continue to breathe and carbonise completely. This raises the question *“how long was the distemper in place and should it be considered a bone-fide decorative scheme or just a stop gap allowing the plaster to cure before the first wallpaper was hung?”*

Although there is no definitive answer to this question, a lack of further distemper schemes in the Entrance Hall and an absence of any dirt accumulation or wear on the surface of the distemper suggests the first wallpaper was hung soon after 1897 and should be considered the first decorative scheme in this area.

To summarise: after construction all the freshly lime plastered walls in the Entrance Lobby Cloak Room and Hall were coated in an ochre tinted distemper, with a repeating stencil pattern depicting a ship in full sail picked out in dark ochre against this background, running at high level around the upper wall face frieze in the Entrance Hall. Soon afterwards a wallpaper was hung in the Entrance Hall, up to frieze level. Fragmentary traces of dark green wallpaper have survived in some isolated areas, but it remains unclear if this is the earliest wallpaper.

The distemper finishes on the walls in the Cloakroom were retained and refreshed with further dark ochre and later whites.

All the joinery (including the timber ceiling coving in the Entrance Hall) was varnished dark oak.

¹ Jennings, A.S. (c1895) *The Modern Painter and Decorator*, Caxton Publishing Ltd., London

There are two layers of paper applied to the Entrance Hall ceiling with a white water paint applied directly above the earliest paper. There are no traces of distemper on the ceiling and this white painted paper appears to be the earliest scheme.

3.3: (Fig.11) The Dining Room (Ground floor front room with bay window)



Samples were removed from the joinery: skirtings, window, door, picture rail, fireplace, coving and architraves, with all displaying an identical appearance for the earliest decorative scheme, in a simple white oil paint. The only exceptions to this, being the door and timber coving which were picked out in pale cream oil paint. The upper wall face is currently painted white onto a lining paper above the plaster substrate, with the potential for a painted frieze beneath. Careful further uncovering will be required to determine if this is the case. No distempers or oil paints were detected on the lower wall face, suggesting the wall up to picture rail level was originally papered.

Fig.12: Sample 2.12, Door (also representative of coving)

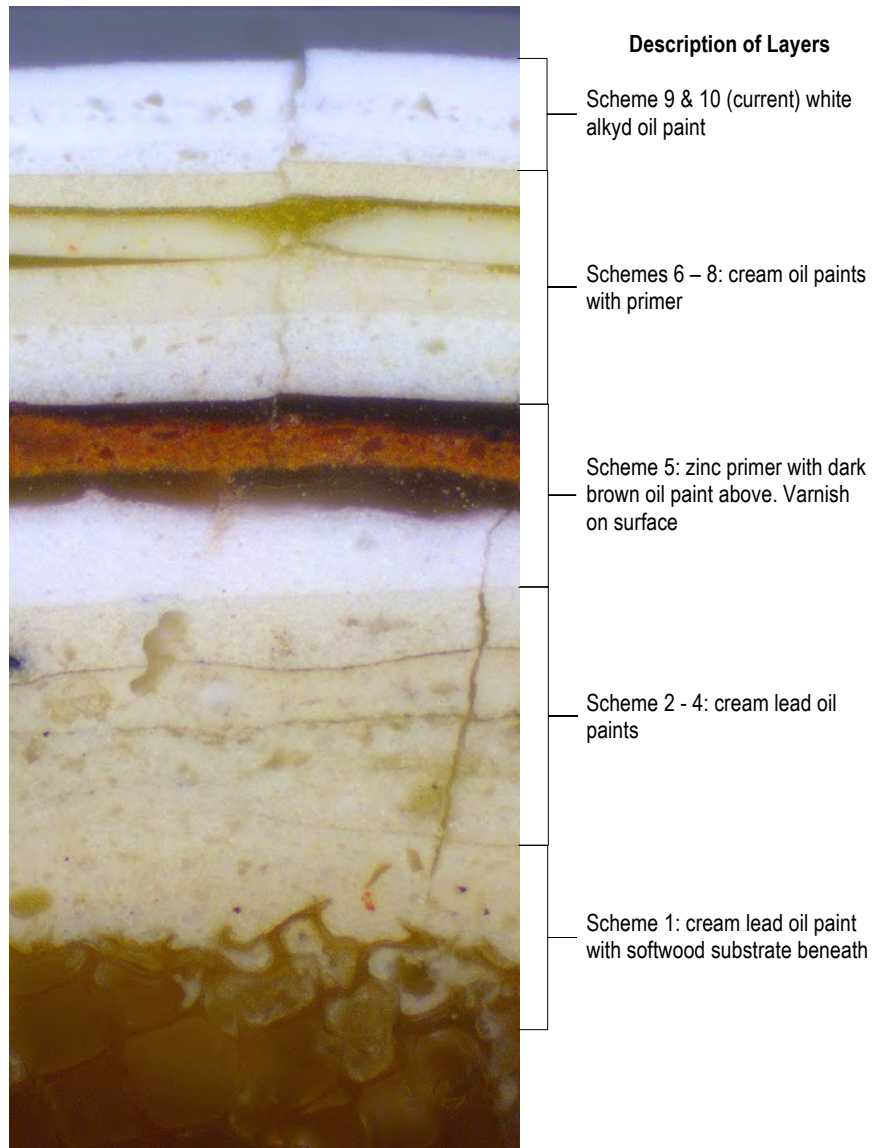
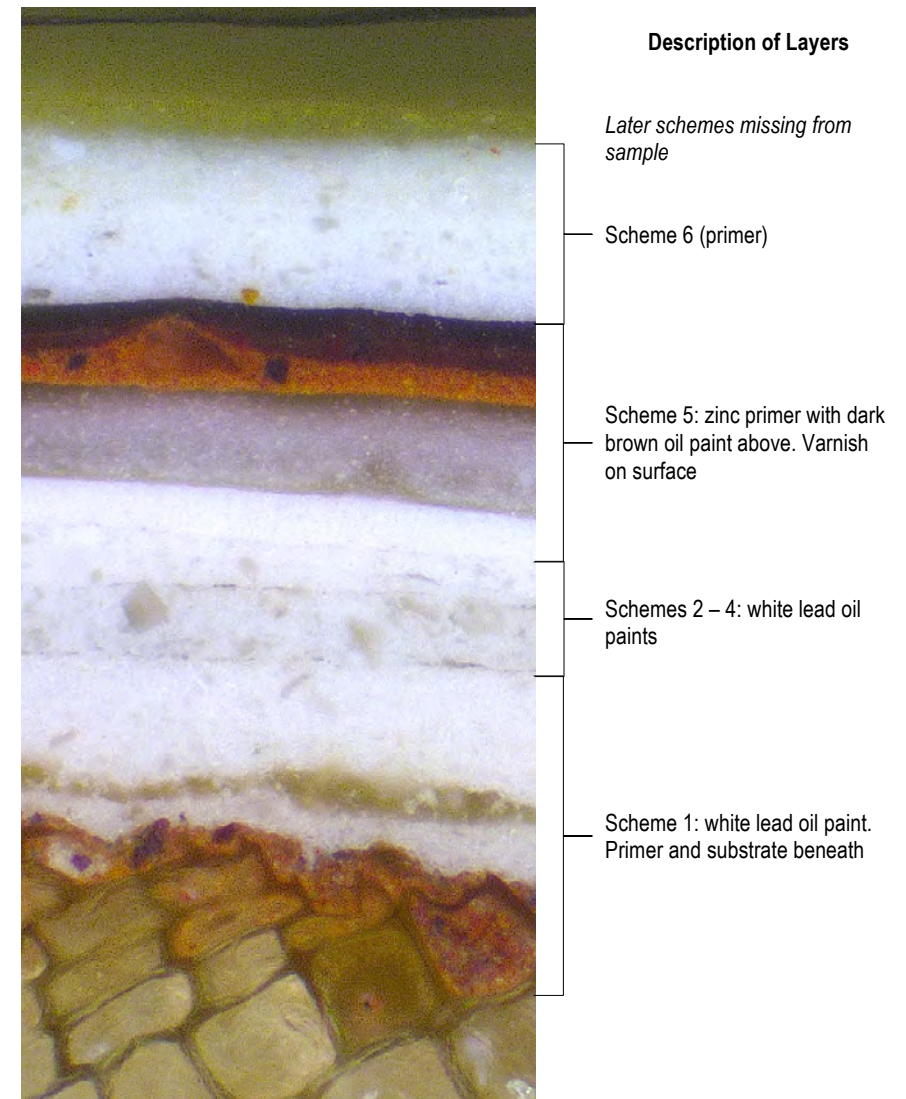


Fig.13: Sample 2.13 skirting boards (also representative of window, picture rail, architraves and fireplace)



3.4: (Fig.14) The Drawing Room



Fig.15: The Drawing Room (French Doors)



Double doors lead off the Entrance Hall into the Drawing Room (the largest room on the ground floor), with a pair of French Doors leading into the garden at the rear of the house.

The Joinery: there is clear evidence on the skirting boards, timber coving and picture rail for a full chronology of decorative schemes with the earliest in dark green lead oil paint. The remaining joinery (doors and windows) have been stripped in the past with no evidence for the earliest decorative schemes surviving. The fireplace mantle has also been stripped but there is trace evidence directly on the surface of the substrate for a dark green oil paint that appears to match the earliest scheme on the skirtings, coving and picture rail.

Walls: There is a dark ochre/orange distemper on the lower wall faces (below the picture rail) that must be considered the plasterer's finish. There are no further distempers or later paints evident on the lower walls, suggesting this room was also originally papered. There are two layers of wallpaper applied to the upper wall face (above the picture rail) with traces of distemper directly above the substrate. This area warrants further investigation to determine the nature of these papers, or the presence of another painted frieze (as seen in the Entrance Hall).

Lining paper on the ceiling with white water paint.

Fig.16: Sample 4.23 Skirting Boards

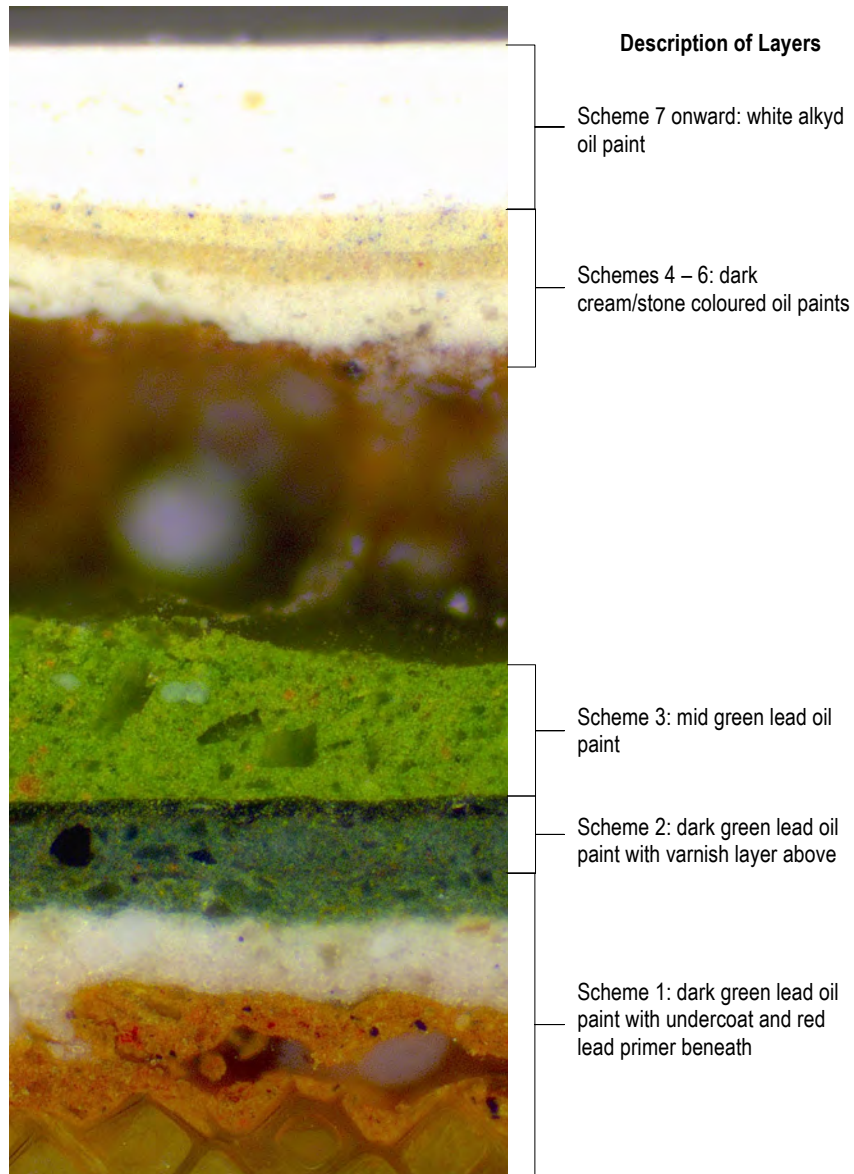
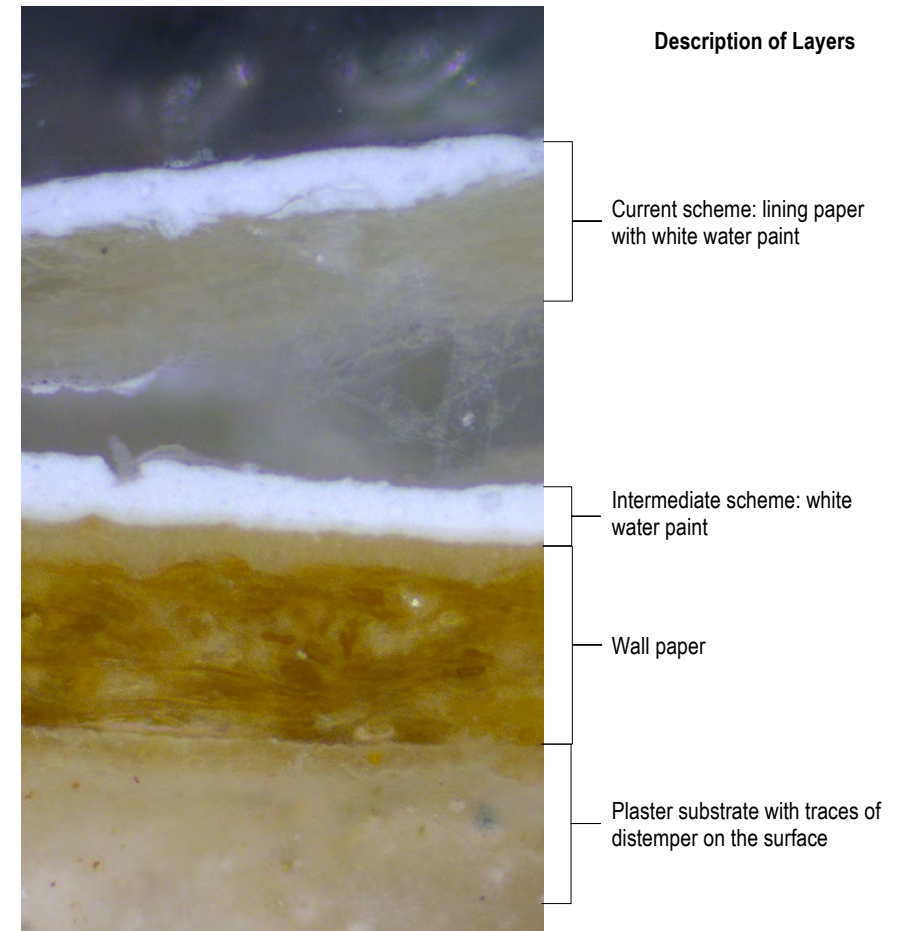


Fig.17: Sample 4.25 upper wall face frieze



3.5: (Fig.18) The kitchen



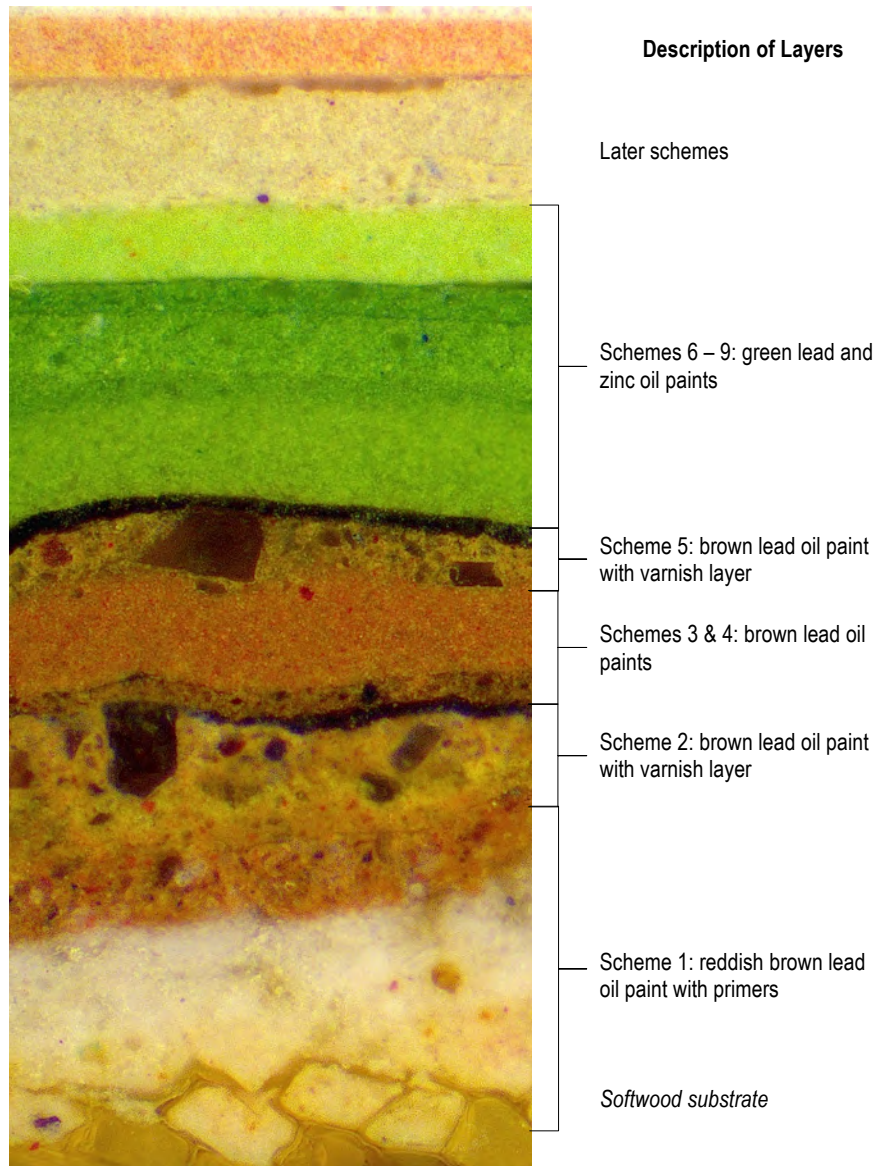
There are several layers of later wall papers in the kitchen that appear to date to the post World War 2 period.

Walls: On the surface of the plaster in many areas is a terra cotta coloured “Sanitary Distemper”. Sanitary distempers were produced by a number of manufacturers at the end of the 19th and early 20th century as a water washable alternative to soft distempers and were particularly popular for use in areas like kitchens that required regular cleaning. One example was the product “Zingessol” manufactured by John B. Orr since the mid 1870’s². This early distemper is the first decorative scheme.

Joinery: All the joinery on the kitchen was initially treated in an identical manner – a reddish/brown lead oil paint. This theme was retained (with later schemes painted and varnished), until the introduction of later green oil paints (see fig.19).

² Duthie, A.L. (1907) *Practical Church Decoration*, The Trade Papers Publishing Co. Ltd., London. An advertisement for “Zingessol” states its introduction ‘over 30 years ago’ as an antiseptic and decorative washable water paint.

Fig.19: Sample 4.26 Skirtings (representative of all joinery in the kitchen)



3.6: (Fig.20) The stairwell and 1st floor landing



The stairwell leads off the Entrance Hall and onto the 1st floor landing, with a dado rail separating the upper and lower wall faces in the stairwell extending as far as the first door frame on the landing. There is no evidence for distemper or paint finishes on the lower wall face, but the upper wall face was initially distempered in the now familiar ochre. It is anticipated both the lower and upper wall faces were papered.

The dado rail was originally varnished dark oak to match the wooden staircase.

Moving onto the landing itself, all the joinery was painted in white lead oil paint with the walls, up to the level of the picture rail, displaying traces of early distemper and an accumulation of wall papers.



The frieze above the picture rail is currently papered and painted white. A single sample removed from this area displays a sealing coat directly on the plaster substrate with strong blue and ochre distempers directly above (see fig. 23). This could be highly significant indicating the possibility of another distemper painted frieze in this area. This warrants further investigation, by carefully removing the wallpaper to reveal the original surface beneath.

Fig.21: Sample 5.29 Door Frame (also representative of all landing joinery)

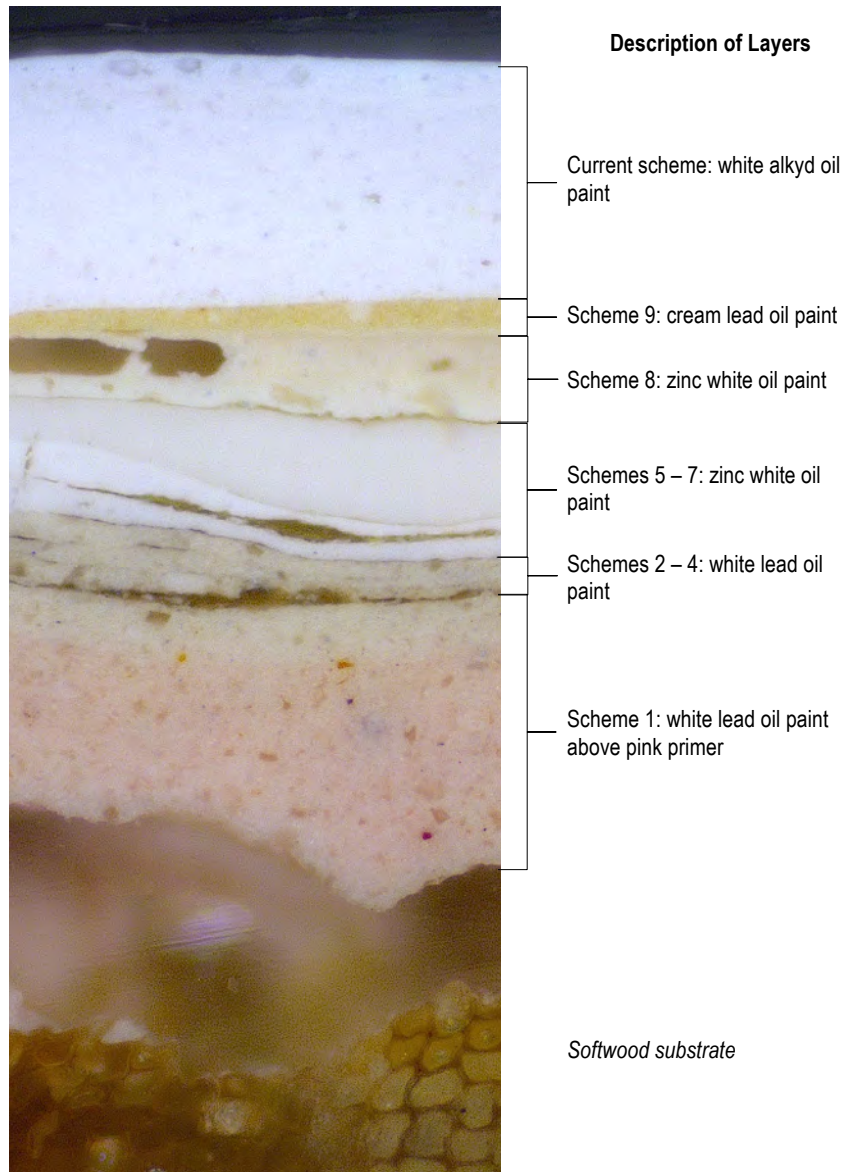


Fig.22: Wall face (Landing)

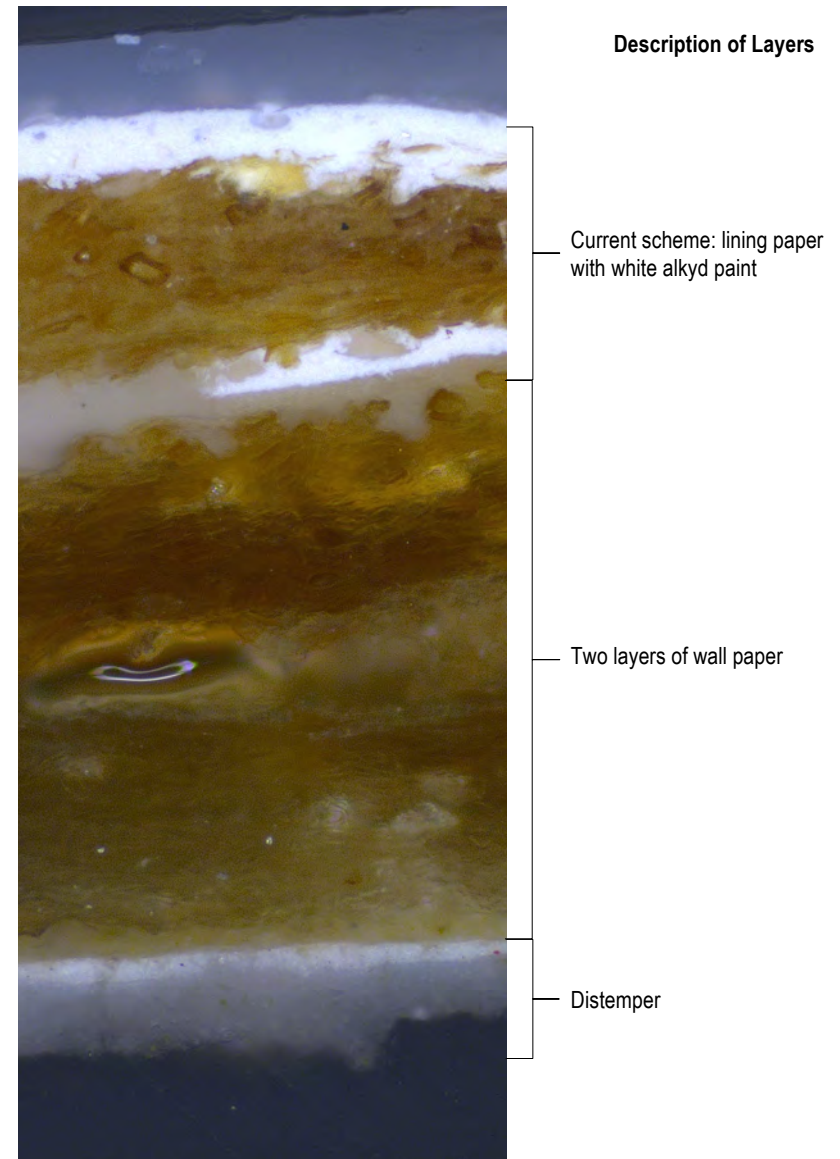
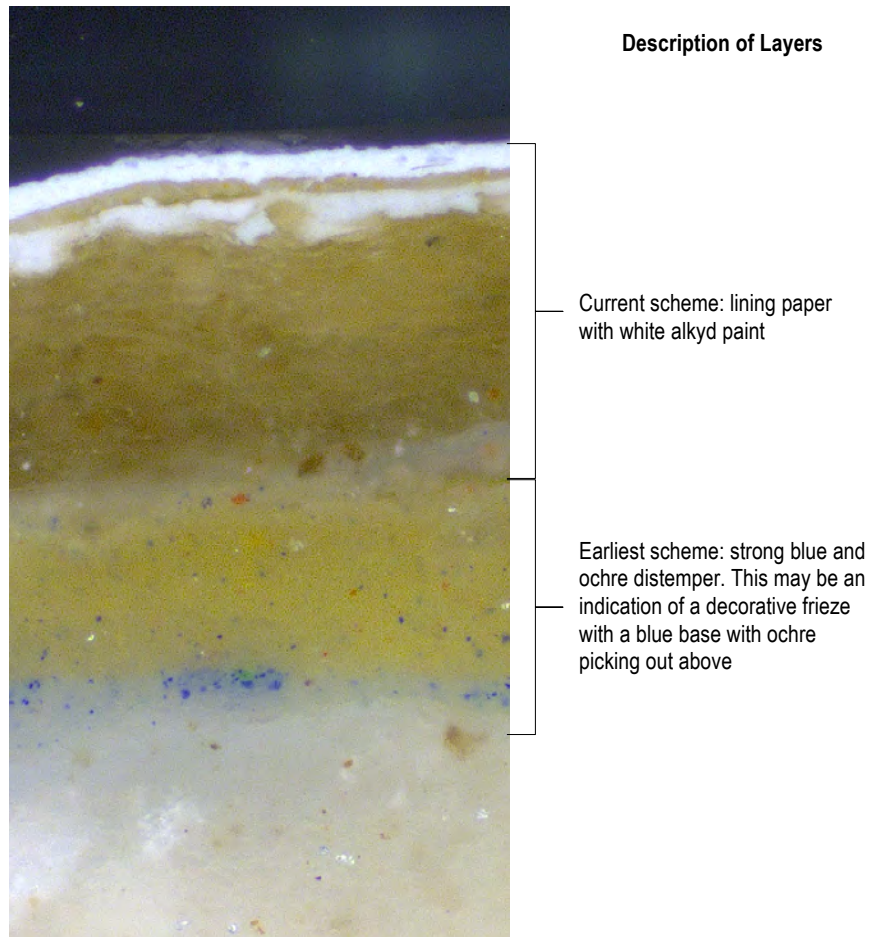


Fig.23: Sample 5.35 Landing upper wall frieze



The original decorative schemes in this bedroom had a distinctly blue theme with traces of blue distemper on the walls up to the picture rail, with ochre distempers above the picture rail at frieze level. All the joinery: window seat, window, skirtings, door, architrave, picture rail and fireplace were painted in blue lead oil paints.

3.7: (Fig.24) Large Bedroom (rear of 1st floor)



A lack of further distemper schemes or oil paints on the walls up to picture rail level, suggest this room was originally papered. The blue theme continued for the following two subsequent decorations and doubtless the blue linoleum on the floor was installed to complement one of these decorative schemes; although its precise date remains speculative it certainly predates the installation of the fitted wardrobes in this room and is a rare survivor in remarkably good condition. The fireplace tiles are contemporary with the late C19 and further complement the originality of this space.

Fig.25: Sample 6.40 Door frame (representative of all joinery)

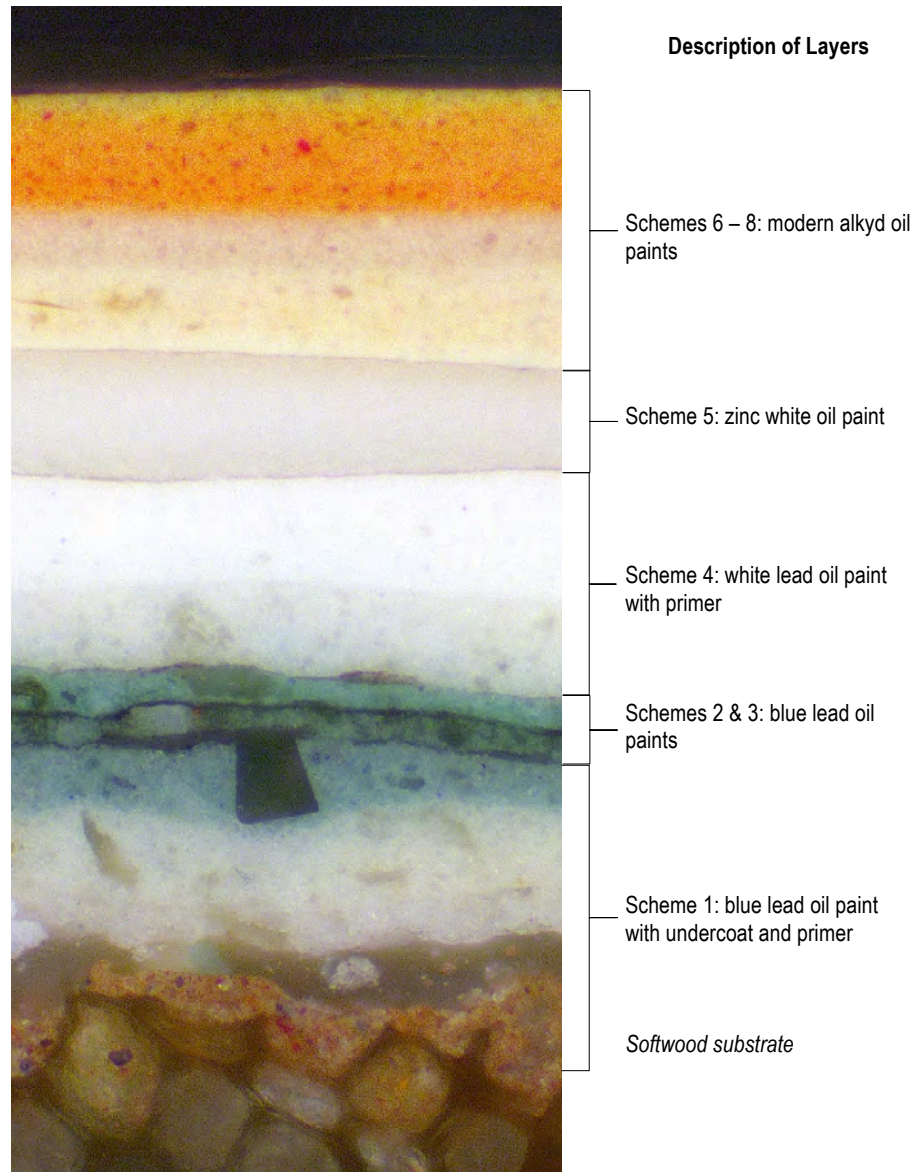
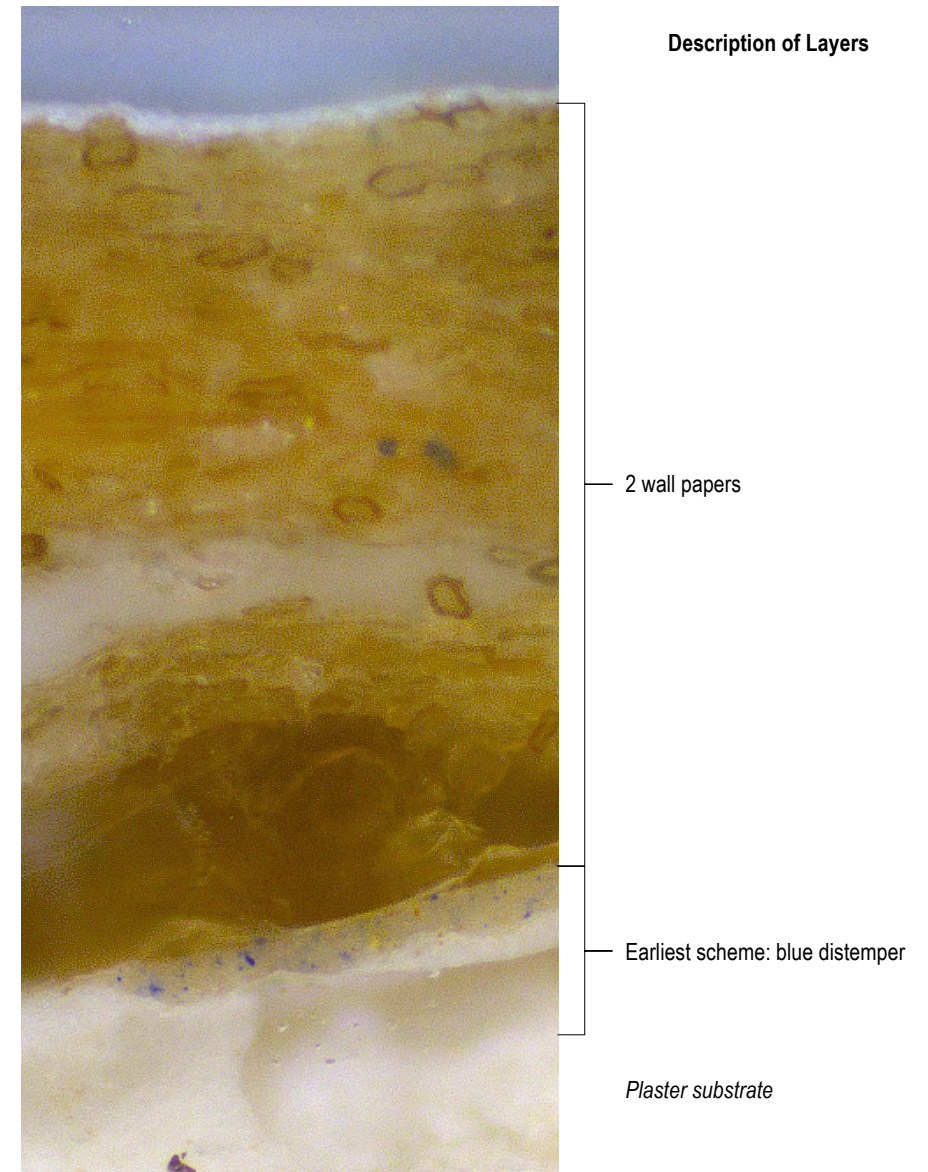


Fig.26: Sample 6.37 Walls (beneath picture rail)



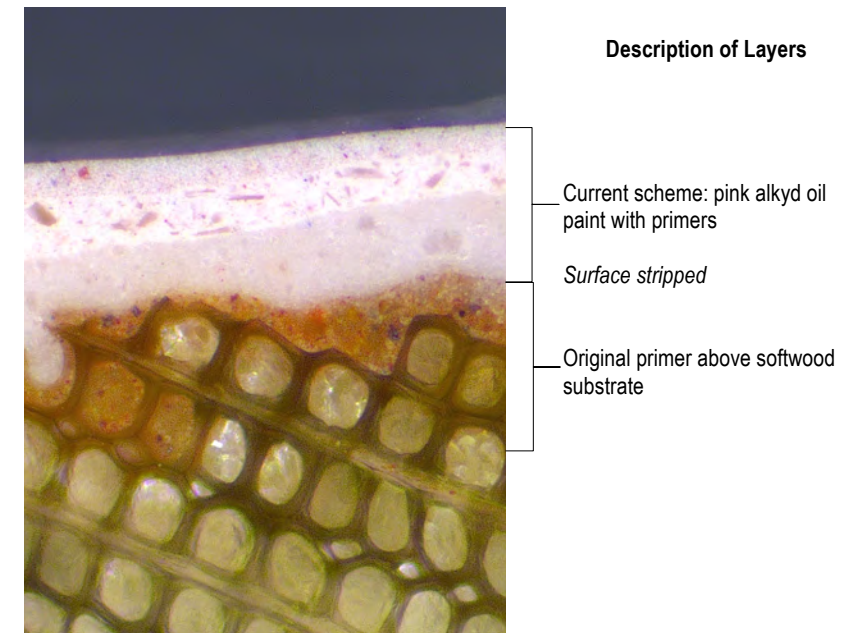
3.7: (Fig.27) Small front bedroom



All the joinery in this room has been stripped prior to the application of the current pink theme. No historical evidence survives.

Samples removed from the wall plaster display a modern gypsum plaster beneath the current wall paper.

Fig.28: Sample 9.57 Skirtings (representative of all joinery)

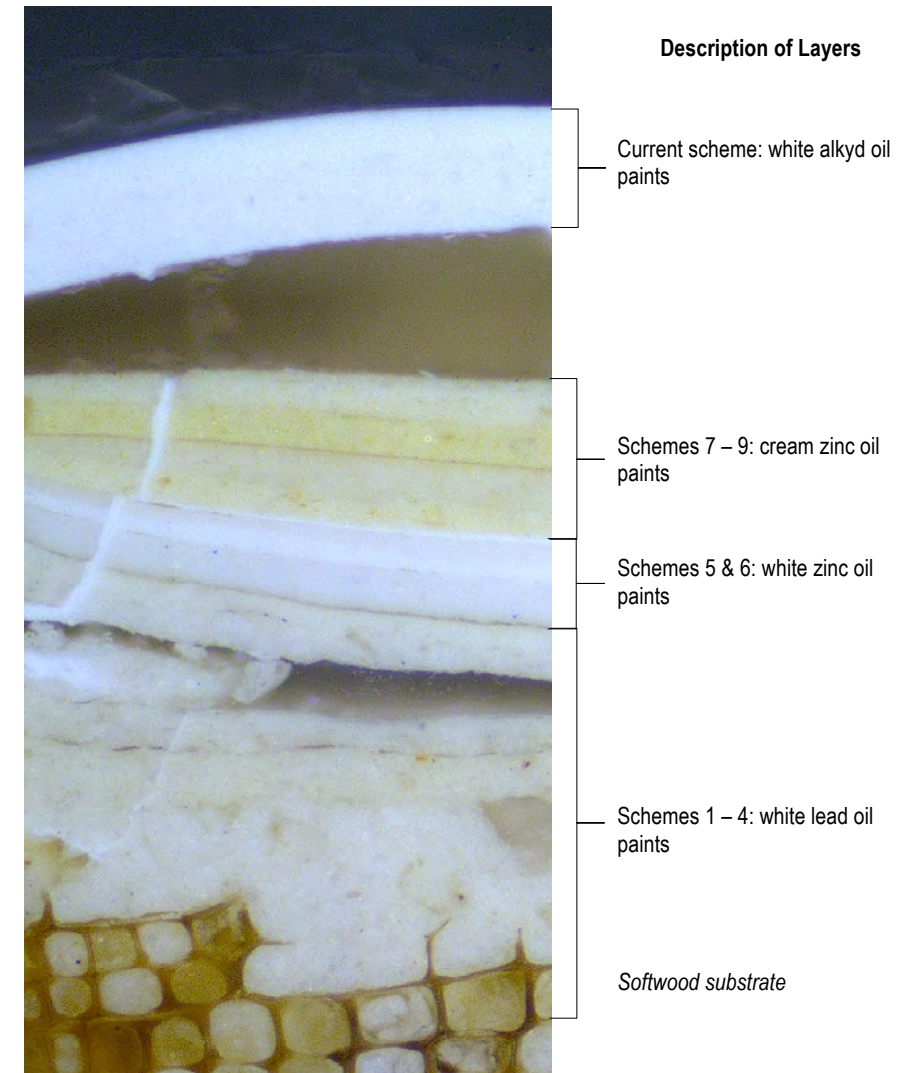


3.8: (Fig.29) The Bathroom



Samples removed from the joinery in the Bathroom display a consistent theme of lead white oil paints as the initial decorative scheme. The built in cupboards and wall panelling are original features with a representative sample displayed opposite.

Fig.30: Sample 8.52 Wall panelling (representative of all joinery)

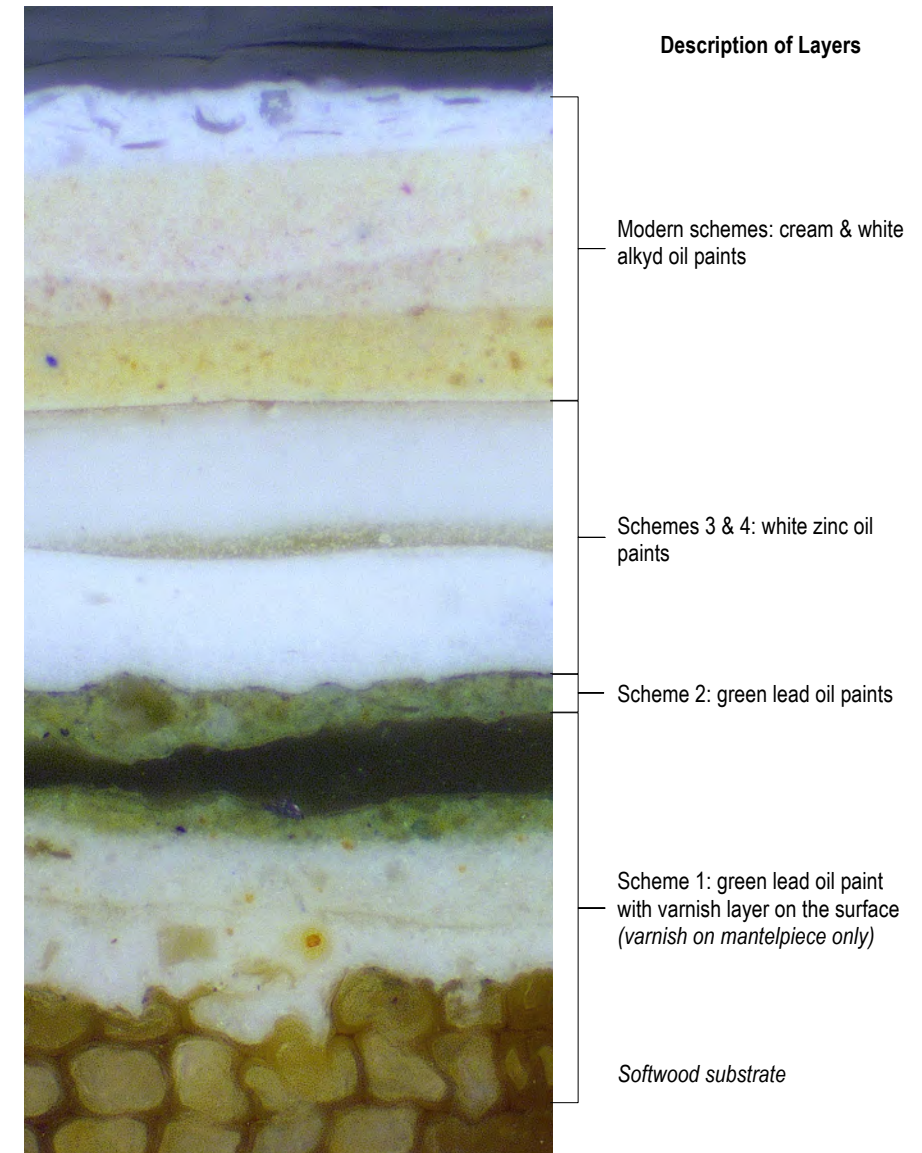


3.9: (Fig.31) Large 1st floor front bedroom



This bedroom has a distinctly green theme applied to all the joinery coeval with scheme 1 (1897). A representative sample removed from the fireplace mantle is included opposite. Note the varnish layer on the surface of the green at scheme 1; this was applied only to the fireplace mantle, with an identical green oil paint applied to all the remaining joinery, but without a varnish layer. The walls are currently papered with modern alkyd paints applied over the surface and white water paint applied to the ceiling. Single layer of ochre distemper on the walls, both above and below the picture rail, suggesting this bedroom was originally wall papered.

Fig.32: Sample 9.63 Fireplace mantle (representative of all joinery)

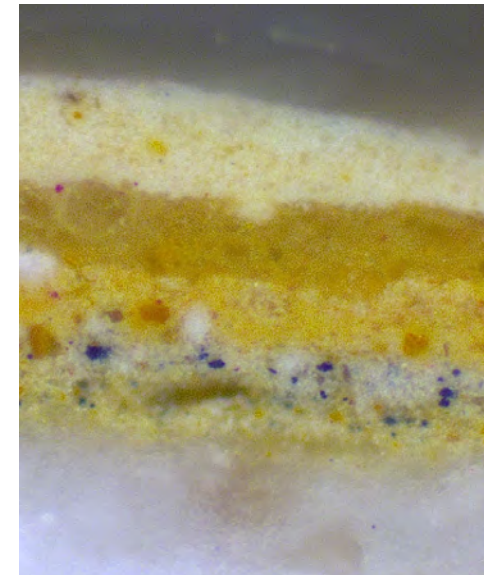


3.10: (Fig.33) Stairwell to 2nd floor (inc. Lobby Area)



The walls in the 2nd floor stairwell and lobby area were originally decorated identically with the now familiar ochre distemper applied uniformly to the walls, with all the joinery in both the stairwell and Lobby area in a white lead oil paint. There are further distemper schemes applied to the walls, suggesting this area was not wallpapered originally and may be a reflection on the use of the upper floor spaces as a lower status area.

Fig.34: Sample 11.77 Stairwell walls



Description of Layers

Extant wall paper missing

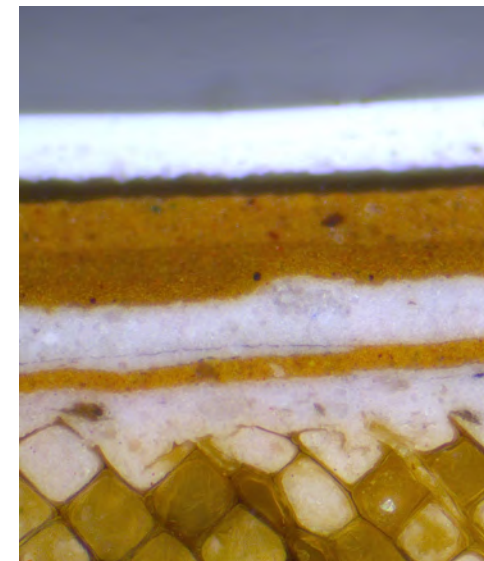
Ochre coloured oil paints

Scheme 3: Ochre oil paint

Scheme 2: Blue distemper

Scheme 1: ochre distemper

Fig.35: Sample 11.79 2nd floor Lobby joinery



Scheme 5: white alkyd oil paint

Scheme 4: brown lead oil paint with varnish layer

Schemes 2 & 3: brown & white lead oil paint with primer

Scheme 1: white lead oil paint with primer

Softwood substrate

3.11: (Fig.36) 2nd Floor Studio Bedroom



The walls in the Studio/Bedroom were originally treated in the same manner as the 2nd floor stairwell and Lobby Area – initially in ochre distempers, followed by blue and further ochres, suggesting this space was not originally papered. All the joinery was painted in a reddish/brown oil paint, with evidence for this still surviving on the inside face of a cupboard door (see fig.37). The fireplace is certainly a later addition.

Fig.37: Surviving original paint finish on cupboard door



Fig.38: Sample 11.75 Bedroom/Studio windows

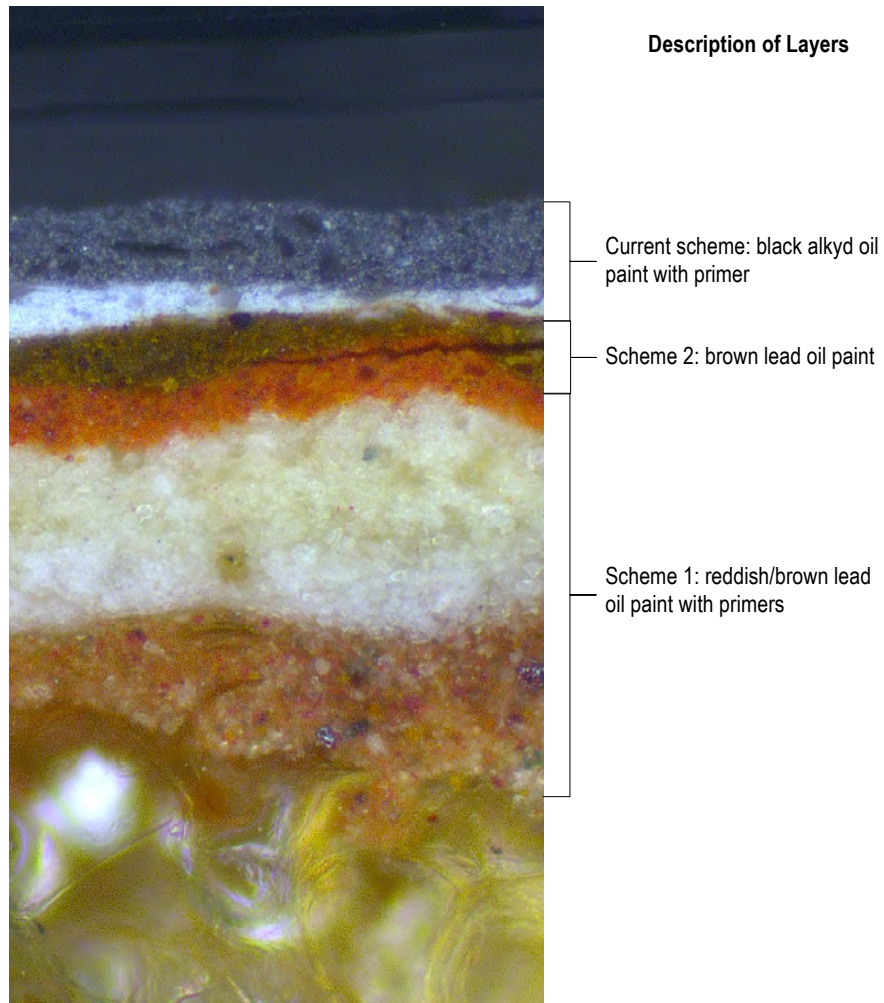
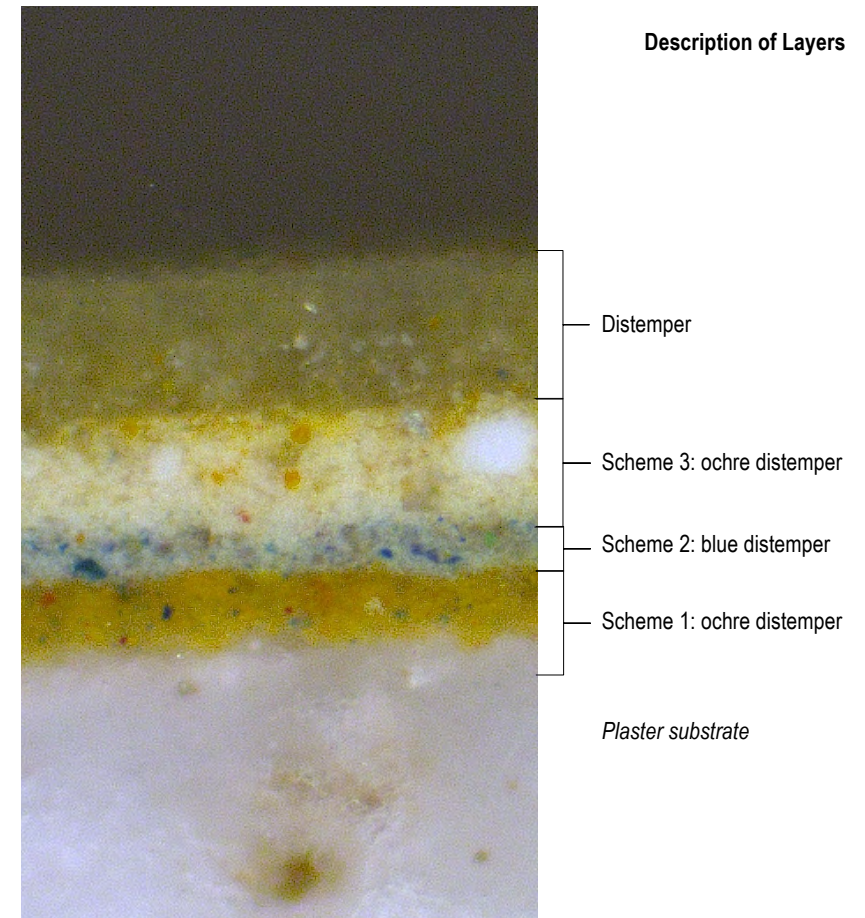


Fig.39: Sample 11.76 Walls

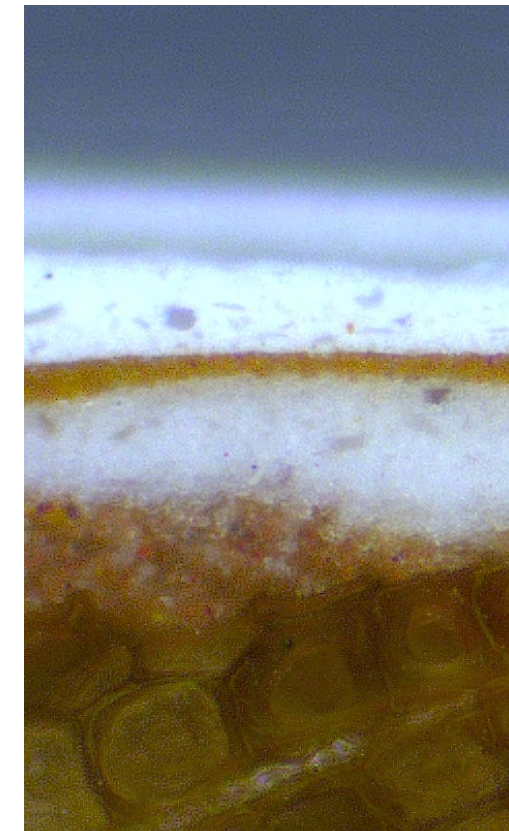


3.12: (Fig.40) 2nd Floor Box Room



The Box Room walls were originally ochre distempered with all the joinery painted in the identical white lead oil paint applied to the joinery in the stairwell and Lobby area (see fig.41).

Fig.41: Sample 11.73 Box Room Joinery



Description of Layers

White lead oil paint with primer

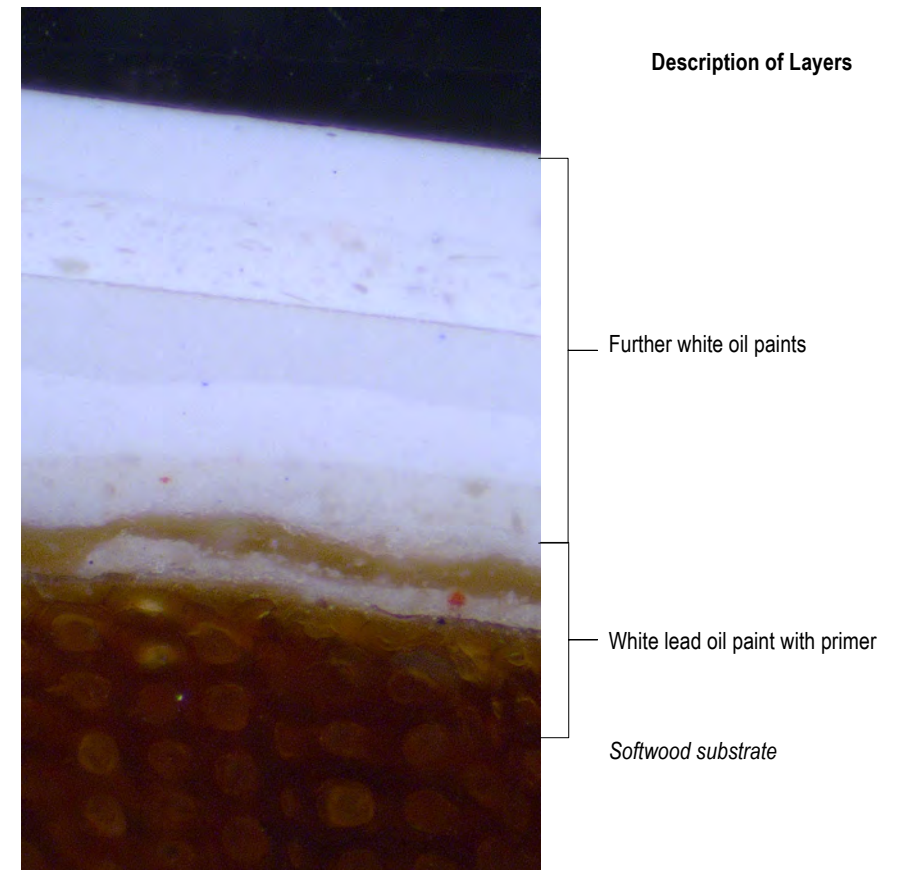
Softwood substrate

3.13: (Fig.42) Small front bedroom (2nd Floor)



Treated identically to the small Box Room with ochre distempers on the walls and white lead oil paints to all joinery. The linoleum on the floor appears to date to the Art Deco period (1930's).

Fig.43: Sample 12.83 Door (representative of all joinery)



4.0: Summary

This evidence based research exercise and report has uncovered a remarkably complete image of the internal and external decorative schemes applied to an Arts & Crafts period house by the acclaimed architect MacKay Hugh Baillie Scott.

To our knowledge this is the first time the decorative schemes in a Baillie Scott house have been investigated in their entirety. A small research exercise has been carried out in the past in the White Room at Blackwell, but nothing on this scale.

There is clear evidence for a stencilled frieze depicting a repeating pattern of a Galleon in full sail in the Entrance Hall and this design has been traced and recorded to scale allowing for faithful recreation at a later date if desired.

A paint sampling exercise of this nature is highly localised and only provides a record of the stratigraphy of decorative schemes applied; it is not able to define more complex designs on a larger scale. There is undoubtedly the **potential** for further stencil work in the house (notably the Drawing Room and 1st Floor Landing) but this can only be confirmed by additional uncovering work. It is therefore vital that any further removal of wall papers at frieze level be carried out with great care and under no circumstances should water be used to soak the paper prior to removal. The paints used on the Entrance Hall stencils are water soluble and any design present could be lost in the presence of water.

Upon completion almost all the walls were distempered. This was part of the plasterer's art, with distempers applied to allow the lime plastered walls to continue to cure completely. These distemper finishes were often left in place for up to 2 years before the first decorative scheme was applied. In the case of Thornbank, evidence suggests all the rooms on the Ground and 1st Floors (excluding the Kitchen & bathroom) were wall papered up to frieze level, potentially using papers by the fashionable designers of

the period, for example: Voysey, Walter Crane and William Morris etc. An insight into the decorative style of the Arts & Crafts period is included below.

Fig.44: Drawing Room (1905) Glencrutchery House, Douglas, Isle of Man



Note the stencilled frieze and the use of dark bold wall paper up to frieze level.

There is a unique opportunity at Thornbank to present the house largely as it would have appeared soon after construction in 1897, which would certainly generate a great deal of interest and curiosity from both the academic community and general public in the UK and overseas. The international significance of this should not be underestimated.

4.1: The fireplaces.

With the exception of the kitchen and large studio on the 2nd floor all the original fireplaces at Thornbank have survived.

Baillie Scott had very distinct ideas about the design and appearance of the fireplace in the suburban house, defined in a paper written by himself and published in *The Studio* in 1895. In this he rails against the painfully ugly appearance of the fireplace in the ‘average house’ and harks back to an earlier age, when the ‘art of home-making was so well understood’. *“The cottage ingle-nook, with its broad brick hearth, its wide settle and roughly hewn oak beam, if not quite achieving our modern ideas of comfort, will serve as an example of that simple homely dignity of style which should be aimed at, and so will make a very good starting point in the consideration of fireplace treatment”*³

At Thornbank, Baillie Scott designed his Inglenook to fit in the Entrance Hall, creating a useable space linking both the Dining and Drawing Rooms. The brick work surrounding the hearth is an important design feature of Baillie Scott’s: *“the use of brickwork gives a homely character to the fireplace, especially if bricks with some variety of colour are used with a good mortar joint. A broad brick hearth will be especially appropriate to an Inglenook and will give plenty of space for piles of logs on each side of the fire, and impart a general air of hospitality to the fireplace”*⁴. The brick hearth in the Entrance Hall could be original (although possibly re-laid), but the painted brickwork surrounding the fireplace is certainly a later insertion, presumably carried out when the fire and back boiler were installed. It is anticipated a shallow ingle-nook sits behind this later work and great care should be taken when removing the existing fire – the original brickwork or possibly glazed tiles may still lie behind this.

³ Baillie Scott, M.H (1897) *The Fireplace of the Suburban House*, *The Studio*, vol.6, no.32 [online], available from <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/archtcts/bs95.htm>

⁴ *ibid*

Fig.45: The Entrance Hall Inglenook



The fireplace in the front ground floor Dining Room (see fig.46) is fitted up to the level of the picture rail and forms a distinctive focal point to the room

Fig.46: Dining Room fireplace



The glazed tiles appear to be original and reflect Baillie Scott's own ideas - *“Glazed tiles may be used in the fireplace, either in connection with a cast iron grate or in lining the recess for a dog grate. Perhaps the most effective, especially if used with red brick,*

*are the blue and white Dutch tiles which present such a variety and quaintness of pattern. The average pattern tile cannot be recommended from an artistic point of view, but some very good effects may be obtained by using the plain glazed tiles in various colours. Of these, perhaps the best are those with what is called an **antique ground** and a rich peacock blue or green, will form a very good background to copper-work in the grate and dogs”*⁵.

The tiles used here bear a striking resemblance to one of the tiled fireplaces at Blackwell (designed by Baillie Scott, 1898-1900) – see fig.47.

Fig.47: Comparable fireplace tiles at Blackwell



⁵ ibid

Fig.48: The Drawing Room fireplace



This timber fireplace has been stripped in the past, but does bear traces clinging to the timber substrate of the same early green oil paint detected on the skirting boards, suggesting it is coeval with 1897.

However, it lacks the tall proportions of the other fireplaces in the house with the hearth appearing to be a later insertion. This suggests the fireplace was altered, possibly in the mid twentieth century by removing the tall over-mantle and setting a new hearth.

The stone coloured tiles, on an antique ground appear to be of identical proportions to the tiles in the adjacent Dining Room and may be original.

The remaining fireplaces in the first floor bedrooms also appear to be original and follow the familiar Baillie Scott proportions, with a high over-mantle extending towards the picture rail.

The image below is the fireplace in the small front bedroom, entirely covered in pink oil paint.

Fig.49: Pink bedroom fireplace



Some of the over paint was mechanically cleaned off a small area on one of the tiles as shown in fig.49, revealing a peacock blue glazed tile beneath on an “antique ground”. Again these appear to be original to the piece and are a reflection of Baillie Scott’s own ideas regarding the presentation of the fireplace.

It is certainly possible to remove all the unsightly pink oil paint from the tiles themselves, the inset surround and hearth, but great care should be taken to avoid damaging the glaze. The tiles are earthenware with a lead glaze which is inherently brittle and a careful combination of both mechanical and solvent cleaning will be required to safely remove all the paint from the tiles and grout.

There are two remaining identical fireplaces in the bedrooms on the first floor with the image right taken in the large bedroom at the front of the house.

Fig.50: Front bedroom fireplace



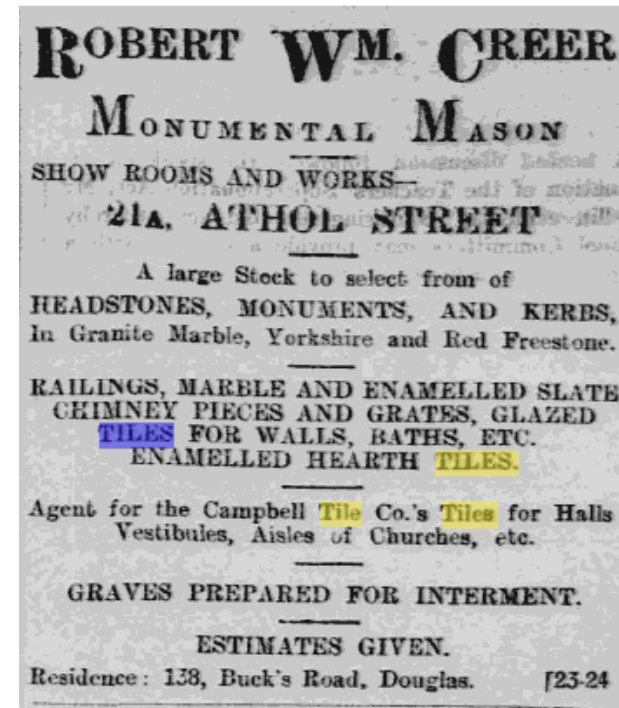
Both fireplaces have identical hand painted earthenware lead glazed tiles that appear to be original and have survived in remarkably good condition.

Fig.51: The fireplace tiles



The tiles may have been sourced through a local supplier, for example: Robert William Creer of Athol Street, Douglas – a monumental mason and supplier of “enamelled hearth tiles” (see fig.52). Creer was the agent for The Campbell Tile Company of Stoke on Trent and advertised widely in a number of local newspapers throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. Campbell's was one of the Minton Tile Companies.

Fig.52: Advertisement, Isle of Man Examiner 1901



By a remarkable co-incidence, the same Robert William Creer was resident at no.1, Falcon Cliff Terrace on the 1911 Isle of Man census (see fig.53).

A copy of the 1901 census for Falcon Cliff Terrace is also included (see fig.54)

4.2: (Fig.53) Census return, 1 Falcon Cliff Terrace, 1911

CENSUS OF THE ISLE OF MAN, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

Number of Schedule 129
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.		BIRTHPLACE of every Person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.	LANGUAGE SPOKEN.
			State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no Children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year, write "under one."	Total Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have Died.				
of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder or Servant, who	State whether "Head" or "Wife," "Son," "Daughter," or other Relative, "Visitor," "Boarder," or "Servant."	For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.	Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.				The reply should show the precise branch of Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &c.	This question should generally be answered by stating the business carried on by the employee. If this is clearly shown in Col. 10 the question need not be answered here.	(1) If born in the Isle of Man, write "Isle of Man" and the name of the Town, or Parish.	State whether— (1) "British subject by parentage." (2) "Naturalized British subject," giving year of naturalisation. Or (3) If of foreign nationality, state whether "French," "German," "Russian," etc.	If any person included in this Schedule is— (1) "Totally Deaf" or "Deaf and Dumb," (2) "Totally Blind," (3) "Lunatic," (4) "Imbecile" or "Feeble-minded," state the infirmity opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.	(1) If able to speak English only, write "English." (2) If able to speak Manx only, write "Manx." (3) If able to speak English and Manx, write "Both."
(1) passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in this dwelling and was alive at midnight, or							If engaged in any Trade or Manufacture, the particular kind of work done, and the Article made or Material worked or dealt in should be clearly indicated. (See Instructions 1 to 8 and Examples on back of Schedule.)	No entry needed for Domestic Servants in private employment. If employed by a public body (Government, Municipal, etc.) state what body. (See Instruction 9 and Examples on back of Schedule.)	(2) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town, or Parish. (3) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, etc., and of the Province or State. (4) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country. (5) If born at sea, write "At Sea." Note.—In the case of persons born elsewhere than in the Isle of Man, state whether "Resident" or "Visitor" in this Island.		No entry to be made in this column for children under three years of age.	
(2) arrived in this dwelling on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere.												
No one else must be included. (For order of entering names see Examples on back of Schedule.)												
1 Robert Wm Greer	Head	40	Married	15			Monumental Mason	390	Worker	Isle of Man Douglas		English
2 Annie C. Greer	Wife	38	Married	15	6	6				"		"
3 Margaret Greer	Daughter	14								"		"
4 Wilfrid Greer	Son	13					At School	390		"		"
5 Jessie C. Greer	Daughter	10					"			"		"
6 Doris Greer	Daughter	10					"			"		"
7 Annie Greer	Daughter	8					"			"		"
8 Emily Greer	Daughter	1								"		"
9												
10												
11												
12												
13												
14												
15												

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that:—
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons.
(3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Initials of Enumerator W.H.

Total.		
Males.	Females.	Persons.
2	6	8

2

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this Dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

Number of Rooms Seven

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Robert Wm Greer

Postal Address 1 Falcon Cliff Terrace Douglas Isle of Man

Fig.54: Census return, Falcon Cliff Terrace 1901

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the																	
Isle of Man.			Civil Parish of			Ecclesiastical Parish of			Town of			Village of					
Col. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. of NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES		Inhabited	Inhabited	Inhabited	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age last Birthday of		PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	If Deaf and Dumb (1) Blind (2) Lame (3) Lunatic (4) Idiote, Feeble-minded	LANGUAGE SPOKEN (children under 3 years of age to be included)
		Uninhabited	Inhabited							Male	Female						
X 19	2 Poplar Ter.	1					Ellen Taylor	Serv		44	X	Refused to be interviewed			Isle of Man. Douglas		English
							George Latham	Head	M	53	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Bartholomew J. do	Wife	M	51	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
X 20	1 Poplar Ter	1					William A. Hellyar	Serv	F	18	X	Refused to be interviewed	Worker		England		English
							John Trellis	Head	M	48	X	Refused to be interviewed	Worker		do		English
							Brany E. do	Wife	M	47	X	Refused to be interviewed			do		English
							Blana E. do	Serv		14	X	Refused to be interviewed			Isle of Man. Dochan		English
X	3 Poplar Road			1													
X	2 Poplar do			1													
X 21	1 Poplar do	1					John Edward Hower	Head	M	58	X	Refused to be interviewed	own account		England		English
							Harriet do	Wife	M	42	X	Refused to be interviewed			do		English
X 22	"Dunella"	1					William G. Latham	Head	M	68	X	Refused to be interviewed			Isle of Man. Douglas		English
							James do	Wife	M	62	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Thomas H. do	Serv	F	34	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Herbert H. do	Serv	F	30	X	Refused to be interviewed	Employer		do do		English
							Antonia J. do	Serv	F	24	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Bara M. do	Serv	F	20	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
X 23	"Maynflote"	1					James Red Patten	Head	M	68	X	Refused to be interviewed			England		English
							Frances do	Wife	M	40	X	Refused to be interviewed			do		English
X 24	Falcon Cliff Terrace	1					William M. Adam	Head		44	X	Refused to be interviewed	Employer		Isle of Man. Douglas		English
							Isabella J. do	Wife		44	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							William R. do	Serv	F	29	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Emily do	Serv		12	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Arthur C. do	Serv	F	10	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Joseph do	Serv	M	24	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Charles Mary Corrie	Serv	F	18	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
X 25	do	1					Lucy Tarrant	Head	M	49	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Reginald J. do	Serv	F	23	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Lacy J. do	Serv	F	18	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
							Violet Cramm	Serv		20	X	Refused to be interviewed			do do		English
X	1 Duke Road.			1													
71	Total of Schedules of Houses and of Tenements with less than Five Rooms ..	71	1	2			Total of Males and of Females...				133	15					

NOTE—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

4.2.1: Notes on the Census Returns

The first census to potentially include the residents at “Thornbank” was taken in 1901 and records only two dwelling houses as being occupied (see fig.54) on Falcon Cliff Terrace.

Neither houses are numbered or bear any name and it appears that these are two of the terrace of four houses designed by Baillie Scott. One was occupied by William McAdam and his family (a local Builder) and the other by Lucy Farrant and her son Reginald (a local Solicitor) and daughter, Lucy. It appears the remaining two houses in the Terrace were unoccupied at this time.

On the 1911 census there are 6 dwellings listed for Falcon Cliff Terrace: “Fuschia Cottage” and five further houses, numbered 1 to 5. It is tempting to assume that “Thornbank” was originally addressed as no.1, Falcon Cliff Terrace (it is the first house in the row, on the corner of Falcon Cliff Terrace and Duke’s Road), adding weight to the argument that William Creer and his family were the occupants of Thornbank in 1911.

Creer and his wife Annie were married in Douglas in 1896 and had at least 6 children, with their daughter Annie born c1903, and it may have been around this time Creer took up occupancy.

It may be purely coincidental that Creer could have provided the tiles at Thornbank (and possibly the remaining houses in the Terrace), potentially admiring the building and purchasing/renting it to accommodate his expanding family.

4.3: The wall papers

Evidence suggests the walls on the ground floor (excluding kitchen), stairwell & landing and first floor bedrooms were wall papered above an initial temporary ochre distemper up to picture rail level, with the potential for further stencil schemes on the wall face friezes above the picture rails. The 2nd floor rooms were not originally wall papered, but simply refreshed with further distempers.

The precise design and colour of the wallpapers used in this Arts & Crafts period house immediately following its construction remains speculative, but if the intention is re-create an Arts & Crafts interior based on the material evidence, it is appropriate to choose designs that not only reflect the period and style of the Arts & Crafts Movement, but also the social status of the occupants.

There was a strong artistic and working relationship between Baillie Scott and the designer Archibald Knox.

Knox began to work part-time in Baillie Scott’s offices on the Isle of Man, contributing designs such as stained glass panels and repousse metalwork. In 1893, Baillie Scott began contributing fabric designs to Liberty & Co. in London, and around 1895 introduced Knox to the firm, when Knox began to send designs for fabric and wallpapers to Liberty. Knox left the Isle of Man in 1897 for Redhill, Surrey, where he went to teach art.⁶

This introduces the possibility of sourcing some of Knox’s Liberty wallpaper designs for Thornbank (Liberty’s and Morris & Co., both sold wallpapers directly to the public, along with a complete range of household furnishings). Generally, the ordinary customer

⁶ Anscombe, I. (1988) *An Outpost of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, vol.8, pp.80-87, Wolfsonian-FIU, USA

purchased wallpapers from their decorator who kept a number of pattern books in stock for the purpose. This situation tended to give disproportionate power to decorators to direct customer choice, with the decorator more likely to be concerned with profit rather than the artistic quality of the papers he sold. Amongst those who objected was the designer and critic Lewis F. Day (who designed for Jeffrey & Co., amongst others): in an article in the Magazine of Art in 1897 he advised readers to “find out the names of the best paper-stainers and insist on seeing their books”, suggesting that this was the best way of ensuring they enjoyed a full choice of the many designs then available⁷.

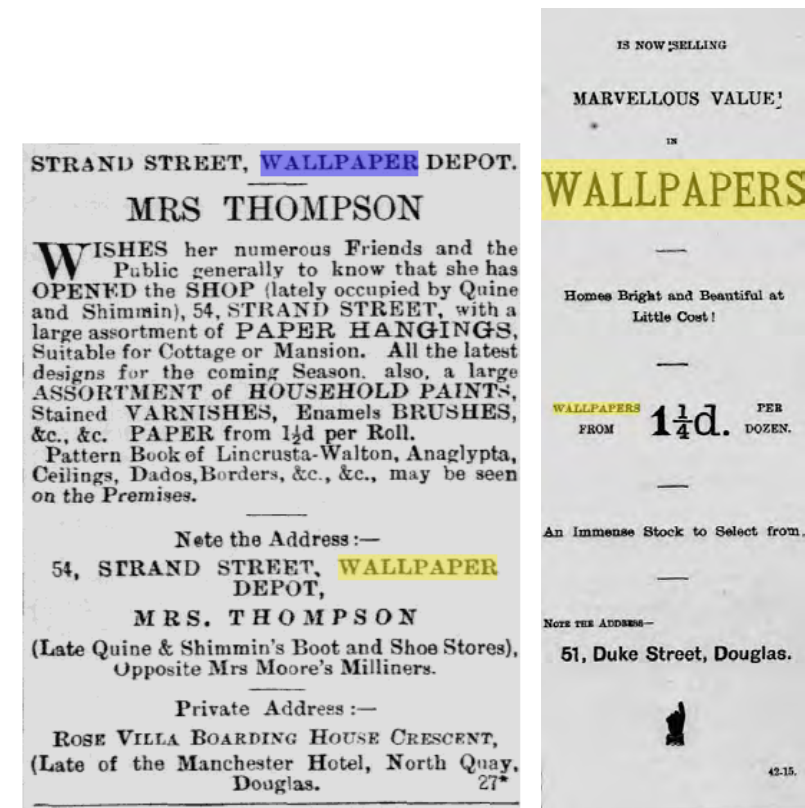
At the end of the 19th century wallpapers varied greatly in quality and price, ranging from Heywood, Higginbottom & Smith, who specialised in machine prints, especially pictorials and ‘sanitaries’, at the cheaper end of the market, to Jeffrey & Co., self-advertised as manufacturers of ‘Art Wallpapers’, mostly hand-block printed, and designed by names such as Morris and Walter Crane. Prices ranged from a few pence for simple patterns printed by machine on cheap paper, to 24 shillings or more for elaborate embossed wall coverings, or hand block-prints using many colours⁸.

The choice of the first wallpapers at Thornbank will have been made by the first occupants of the house and potentially will have sourced them either through their decorator or a local supplier on the Island. Two potential suppliers were advertising their services on the Island in 1897/98 (copies of both advertisements, taken from the Manx online archive) are included opposite. Note the advert for Mrs Thompson, supplying all the latest designs for the coming season, suitable for Cottage or Mansion.

⁷ Victoria & Albert Museum (2016) *Shopping for Wallpaper*, [online], Available from: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/s/shopping-for-wallpaper/>

⁸ *ibid*

Fig.55: Contemporary advertising



The choice of suitable wallpapers for Thornbank is crucial to presenting this interior in a manner that reflects the social status and tastes of the initial occupants of the house. A few examples of the period are included overleaf and Lincoln Conservation can provide assistance with the selection of wallpapers if desired, assisted by the examination of our own archive and previous research.

Fig.56: Walter Crane for Jeffrey & Co. 1902⁹



⁹ V&A Pattern (2011) *Walter Crane*, V&A Publishing, London

Fig.57: C.F.A. Voysey for Essex & Co. c1898¹⁰



¹⁰ V&A Pattern (2011) *C.F.A. Voysey*, V&A Publishing, London

Fig.58: William Morris (Morris & Co.) 1896¹¹



William Morris's name and reputation are indissolubly linked to wallpaper design, but there is a tendency to overestimate the influence he had in this field, particularly in his own lifetime. His wallpapers were hand-made and expensive, and consequently had a relatively limited take up.

By the late 1890's Morris wallpapers were commonly found in 'artistic' middle class homes; they were certainly used by Edward Burne-Jones and the Punch cartoonist Linley Sambourne.

Morris's papers were too expensive for most, but by the 1880's their growing appeal had been recognised by other designers and manufacturers who began to produce cheaper papers in the Morris style. The Silver Studio in particular, was responsible for many wallpapers in the Arts & Crafts style which show clear evidence of Morris's influence and example. Even by the late 1870's machine printed papers, influenced by Morris's designs were available for as little as 7d a roll.¹²

Given the social status of the earliest occupants at Thornbank, it is likely they purchased fashionable, cheaper wallpapers in the Arts & Crafts style sourced through a local supplier.

¹¹ V&A Pattern (2011) William Morris, V&A Publishing, London

¹² Victoria & Albert Museum (2016) William Morris & Wallpaper Design [online], Available from: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/w/william-morris-and-wallpaper-design/>



Conservation, restoration and research of historic buildings and artefacts

**“Thornbank”, Falcon Cliff Terrace, Douglas, Isle of Man
Supplemental Report on the surviving linoleum
Manx National Heritage**

Author: Paul Croft (Conservator & Research Fellow)

February 2016

School of History and Heritage
College of Arts
University of Lincoln
Brayford Pool
Lincoln
LN6 7TS

Phone: 01522 83 5051/5055
Email: info@lincolnconservation.co.uk
Web: www.lincolnconservation.co.uk
Twitter: @LinConservation



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

1.0: Introduction

'Thornbank' is an end terrace property situated on Falcon Cliff Terrace in Douglas, Isle of Man. The house was constructed in 1897 to a design by the celebrated Arts & Crafts Architect, MacKay Hugh Baillie Scott.

Fig.1: Thornbank, Falcon Cliff Terrace



Lincoln Conservation were commissioned by Manx National Heritage to investigate the decorative history of the house since construction, with particular emphasis on the earliest decorative scheme extant soon after construction in 1897.

There are a number of early linoleum floor coverings in the house, protected by later coverings. This brief report will appraise these coverings, attempt to broadly date them, examine causes of deterioration and make recommendations for their conservation.

2.0: Brief History¹

Linoleum was first patented in Britain by Frederick Walton in 1860, with Walton establishing his first factory in England in 1864 (The Linoleum Manufacturing Company) and by 1869 was exporting his product throughout Europe and North America. Essentially, linoleum is oxidised linseed oil mixed with ground cork dust, gums and pigments, which are then pressed between heavy rollers onto a canvas backing. By the 1870's/80's linoleum had become an extremely popular and widespread floor covering, acknowledged for its durability, hygienic properties and relatively low cost. One of the largest centres for linoleum manufacture in the Britain at the end of the C19 and early C20 was the Scottish firm Nairn, based in Kirkcaldy.

¹ Simpson, P.H. (1997) *Linoleum and Lincrusta: The Democratic Coverings for floors and walls*. Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, vol.7, Exploring Everyday Landscapes, pp. 281-292. Published by Vernacular Architecture Forum.

3.0: The Linoleums at Thornbank

Fig. 2: Example 1 (Large Bedroom rear of 1st floor)



A floral pattern on blue background with border to fit the room.

The walk in wardrobe at the top of the image has been inserted on top of the lino covering and clearly post-dates it.

Fig.3: Example 2 (Small front bedroom)



A busy repeating pattern intended to mimic carpet.

Compare with similar “carpet designs” listed in the Dominion Linoleum Catalogue dating to 1926² – see Summary.

² Available as a free download from the Internet Archive <https://ia800302.us.archive.org/17/items/DominionLinoleumFloorOilclothFeltolTableOilcloth1926/10955.pdf>

Fig.4: Example 3 (2nd floor Studio Bedroom)



Fig.5: Example 4 (Small front bedroom, 2nd Floor)



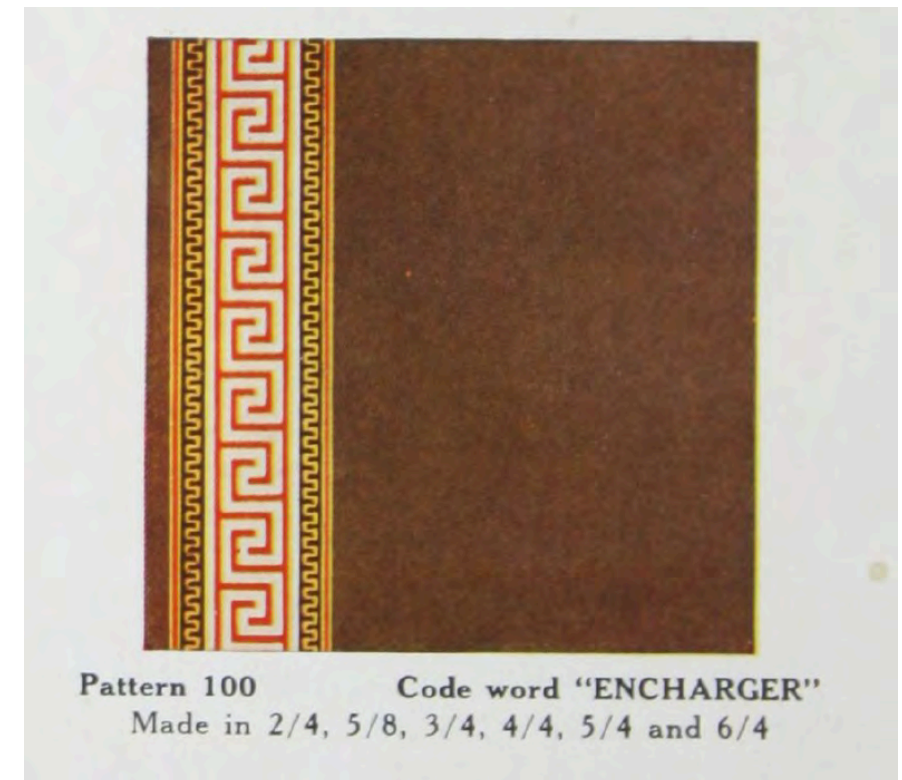
A geometric Art Deco design with border to fit the room.

Fig.6: Example 5 (Stairs to 2nd Floor)



This stair runner leads from the 1st floor landing up to the 2nd floor. Note the presence of the original brown oil paint on the edge of the stair; indicating the presence of an earlier stair covering, suggesting this lino/oilcloth runner is a later insertion and not coeval with the construction of the house. This identical pattern is identified in the Dominion Linoleum & Oil Cloth Catalogue dated to 1926 (see Catalogue extract below) and described as a “Passage Linoleum”.

Fig.7: Extract from 1926 Dominion Catalogue



Conservation Issues³

All the linoleum at Thornbank has deteriorated over time. When conserving linoleum, it is important to analyse the causes of deterioration, intervene as little as possible and test all intervention first.

The deterioration of linoleum has three primary causes

1. Wear – resulting from abrasion from dirt and grit in high traffic areas. Heavy furniture and high heeled shoes cause indentations that can also seriously damage the surface. Where worn areas are severe and have exposed the burlap backing, water damage to the backing is also likely.
2. Water – even when worn areas have not penetrated the surface, water may cause individual pieces of straight line inlaid linoleum to separate and warp, allowing moisture to penetrate the backing. Once exposed to water the backing material can separate from the top layer. Moisture and damp conditions will degrade the wood flour in linoleum, causing it to swell and lift or curl at the edges.
3. Chemical changes within the product itself – linoleum is susceptible to damage from exposure to alkali. Cleaning solutions containing alkalis will soften the linseed oil, destroy cork filler material and attack the printed surface. Alkali damaged surfaces appear pitted or severely abraded. Changes in the chemical make-up of aged linseed oil can also cause deterioration,

causing linoleum to become brittle as the linseed oil continues to oxidise over time. This is certainly the case here at Thornbank, where the lino coverings have been in place for at least the last 80 years or so. Linseed oil also darkens over time, especially when kept in a dark environment (for example, covered with later floor coverings), causing light and medium value colours to darken significantly.

Conservation Techniques

Redirecting foot traffic through a room, moving furniture to hide and protect the worn areas, and placing plastic or rubber cups under the legs of heavy furniture are the simplest conservation techniques. When cleaning, the goal is to minimise the stress on the system while improving the floor's appearance. Anything used should be trialled first on a small area. The mild soaps recommended by current manufacturers may have a pH that is too high for use on aged flooring and mild non-ionic surfactants with a neutral pH are recommended, but even this should be tested first.

Avoid prolonged contact with water and liquid bleaches, and powdered abrasive cleaners should be avoided. Manufacturers often coated printed linoleum with varnish or shellac. When working with these products, a small area should be tested to identify the coating. Turpentine will remove varnish, but may also soften the printed surface. Shellac responds to denatured alcohol. Alternatively, it may be a better option leave any surface coatings in place.

³ Jester, T.C (2014) *Twentieth Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, pp. 187-188, Getty Conservation Institute, US

Summary

All the linoleums at Thornbank appear to post date the construction of the house and were probably introduced during the 1920's / 30's. Example 2 (small 1st floor front bedroom) is a carpet weave design, to style of which, again features prominently in the 1926 Dominion Catalogue (see below)

Fig.8 : Carpet weave example 1926 Dominion Catalogue



The linoleum in the small 2nd floor bedroom is a geometric Art Deco design and again clearly dates to this period.

These linoleums have been in place for some considerable time, but in most cases have survived well – presumably because they have been covered and protected by later floor coverings. All have become brittle with age, due to the decay processes indicated earlier. It may be inadvisable to attempt to remove them from the property because any attempt to roll them will almost certainly cause them to crack. All require cleaning with a suitable pH neutral conservation grade surfactant and it may be prudent to record them and leave in situ with a suitable protective layer above.